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Journey Of The Magi

*'A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a long journey:
The ways deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter.'
And the camels galled, sore-footed, refractory,
Lying down in the melting snow.
There were times we regretted
The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,
And the silken girls bringing sherbet.
Then the camel men cursing and grumbling
And running away, and wanting their liquor and women,
And the night-fires going out, and the lack of shelters,
And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly
And the villages dirty and charging high prices:
A hard time we had of it.
At the end we preferred to travel all night,
Sleeping in snatches,
With the voices ringing in our ears, saying
That this was all folly.*

*Then at dawn we came down to a temperate valley,
Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation;
With a running stream and a water-mill beating the darkness,
And three trees on the low sky,
And an old white horse galloped away in the meadow.*

*Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves over the lintel,
Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver,
And feet kicking the empty wine-skins.
But there was no information, and so we continued
And arrived at evening, not a moment too soon
Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory.*

*All this was a long time ago, I remember,
And I would do it again, but set down
This set down*

*This: were we led all that way for
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death,
But had thought they were different; this Birth was
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death.*

T. S. Eliot

Reprinted from:

M. H. Abrams, ed., **The Norton Anthology of English Literature**, 4th ed. Vol. II,
(New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1979.)

The Similar Journey Of The Magi And Modern Man

T. S. Eliot, in his poem, "Journey of the Magi," presents his ideas of the wise men's thoughts and feelings on their trip to Bethlehem, thoughts and feelings still common among people today.

Who were these men who traveled so far, with only a star to guide them, to give gifts to a child born in an obscure Judean village?

"And opening their treasures they presented to Him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh." (Matt. 2:11, New American Standard)

The Magi were, according to the Peloubet's **Bible Dictionary**,

a Median race who acted as priests of the Persians, but whose persistence as a race is frequently attested and occasionally causes violent conflicts. They were priests of Zoroaster, giving their time largely to astrology, the interpretation of dreams, natural science, and medicine. (pp. 378-379)

Eliot begins his poem with a stark description of the weather and terrain through which the wise men traveled on their journey. He describes it as being ". . . the worst time of the year/The very dead of winter." Their caravan must have been very large, for these Magi were noble men, probably with many slaves and servants. It must have been extremely trying for an entourage of its size, probably 100 to 150 people, to travel the great distance they came, in the dead of winter, through the hazardous Judean wilderness. How many times did these sages want to turn back and return home? But a compulsion they did not understand led them on and they persevered, finally arriving at Bethlehem.

Eliot begins the second stanza of the poem by saying that when the wise men get to Bethlehem, it is warm, as Eliot puts it ". . . a temperate valley." The Magi find this Christ child in a warm, dry, easily accessible place.

Perhaps his descriptions of the changes in climate reflect some of Eliot's feelings and some of ours. Eliot had undergone a religious experience, converting to Anglo-Catholicism in 1927, before writing this poem (Pierce, 16). Perhaps, Eliot is showing one's feelings toward God in his descriptions of the weather and terrain. When the Magi were far from Bethlehem, the weather was horrendous and the traveling hard. With Bethlehem symbolizing one's relationship to God, Eliot could be showing that away from God, in the wilderness, the way is rough going. But, as the Magi are approaching Bethlehem, getting closer to God,

the traveling becomes easier, more pleasant. How close does this parallel one's personal life. When one is away from God, the "traveling" is hard. When one draws near to God, the going becomes easier. You will hear this idea brought out many times when a person gives a Christian testimony. The worst times of that person's life were the times he felt isolated from God. But, as the person came closer to God, his life became more peaceful and everything just seemed to work itself out.

Next, Eliot describes the scene the Magi view as they descend into the valley. As they descend, the Magi see ". . . three trees on the low sky/And an old white horse galloped away into the meadow . . ." The three trees are apparently a reference to the three crosses which stood on Golgotha the day of Christ's crucifixion. But what of the old white horse? Some critics have thought that perhaps this is an allusion to the white horse Christ rides upon Revelation. "And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer." (Revelation 6:2, King James Version) But, Eliot's horse is riderless, while the horse in Revelation has a rider. The horse in the poem is perhaps a symbol which depicts the traditional role riderless horses have been associated with, the deaths and funerals of lost leaders (**The Explicator, 9-10**).

At the end of the second stanza, the Magi find the child and comment that his lodgings were "satisfactory." The Magi may have found the Child in the stable, or, as some scholars believe, the Child and His parents were living in a small house in Bethlehem (Ogilve, 33). The Magi found the place "satisfactory." How ironic that the Son of God should be found living in a home that was just "satisfactory." Many people would have thought that God would have sent His Son into the world with trumpet fanfares and all the choirs of heaven to announce His coming. But Christ came into the world with little announcement. It is very much like this today. But, perhaps, it is our "house" that Christ finds only "satisfactory." Maybe our house, our hearts and lives, will not be right until we decide Christ is more than just satisfactory; but, until we make this decision, our house will just be satisfactory.

Perhaps, Eliot is not referring to the lodgings of the Christ child as "satisfactory." This may have been the only way the Magi had of expressing their amazement. When one thinks of God and all His power, one is struck with a sense of awe. How can one describe such a being as God, who put the planets into orbit and created everything, in the confines of language. The writers of the Scriptures, using the much more exact Hebrew and Greek languages, still could not give descriptions of God which matched His true majesty. This may be the reason Eliot uses the word **satisfactory** in this description. Simply put, a better word could not be found.

The last stanza of this poem is a remembrance. One of the Magi is remembering the trip, the trip he took so long ago, the trip which had such a profound effect on him that he returned to his native land a changed man. He is remembering this trip and wondering if he had gone all that way, that long journey, to witness a birth or a death? There was certainly a birth in Bethlehem, but also a death? Perhaps the Magi recognizes this newborn babe was destined to die in agony and, with his death, the power that sin has over the souls of man would also be dead. It is through this death that man is given a new birth, the rebirth of his soul.

The stanza also says that “. . . this Birth was hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.” Perhaps, the Magi realizes that the new birth of Christ is not easy. Persecution will follow, whether actual physical persecution or emotional torment. Maybe, he also realized that for this new birth to take place, part of himself must die. That part of himself that wants to control his life, make all the decisions, look out for number one, and be self-centered must die. Many people today, when they receive the new birth of Christ, do not want to die to self. They want to keep just a little part of their life to themselves, instead of turning their life totally over to Christ. Maybe this is why so many Christians are apt to turn their backs to God. Without Christ in total control, the tiny bit of their own life gradually becomes more and more, until Christ is pushed out of the way and the person is back in control of his life. Not until persons relinquish every part of their life to Christ's control will those persons be truly happy and content.

The last stanza also says that when the Magi returned to his native land, he was ill at ease “...with an alien people clutching their gods...” After this journey, the kinship which the Magi had once felt for his native people no longer exists. The significant word in this line is the **their** before **gods**. These were the pagan gods the Magi had worshipped all his life; but, after the experience of meeting the Christ child and feeling the presence of the One True God, his return to his homeland was marked by a reluctance to participate in the worship of the old gods. This wise man now views them as alien, as the gods of the people, but no longer his gods. This wise man had an experience with God that changed his life. People today also have these kinds of experiences and people today still worship other gods. The gods aren't Ahura Mazda or Ahriman, as they were in the Magi's time; but, today, wealth, position, and beauty have taken over as the things people worship (Woolf, 1385). Until the people of today have an experience like that of the Magi, a face-to-face meeting with God, their lives will be empty and they will never know the true meaning of happiness and peace.

The last line of the poem says “...I shall be glad of another death...”

The Magi is not referring to the death of his selfish self, but rather, to his physical death. He is wanting to die, so he can be in the presence of God. Many people feel they should go through life as they please, thinking they will never die. However, for the Christian, death is not something to be feared or avoided but looked forward to in anticipation. The Christian knows when he dies, a far more glorious experience awaits him in Heaven. Perhaps, this is much the way the Magi felt in wishing for another death. Many people feel like this Magi felt. They know that when they die, they will go to be with God for eternity. With this assurance, no one should fear death.

In this poem, "Journey of the Magi," T. S. Eliot brings out many aspects of Christianity through use of symbols, analogies, and allusions. This poem is inspirational because it can help open one's eyes to areas of life that could be improved. Those who read this thoughtfully and carefully can recognize areas of his life that could use improvement. In this poem, Eliot has written something provoking and disturbing; but at the same time, calm and reassuring.

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Tom Martin
First Place, Formal Essay

Numerical Symbolism In Sir Gawain And The Green Knight

Throughout the ages, numbers have been thought of by people to hold mystical powers. Seven was considered by the Greeks as a lucky number, eight was considered in many ancient lands as the symbol for magic, and nine and five became known in some countries as the numbers of truth. For several members of the medieval Christian church, these superstitions were reinforced, rather than abolished, by the various rituals and symbols which were used by their priests and which were held to be sacred. Even today, many are preoccupied with recurring Biblical numbers such as seven and forty-nine and with the mysterious six hundred sixty-six of The Revelation.

The unknown author of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* was aware of the enjoyment procured from the symbolic use of numbers in literature. In his poem, he set out to please his Christian readers by delicately weaving the mysticism of the number five within a section of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.

The author tells of a "pentangle portrayed in purest of gold" which hung from Sir Gawain's neck before he started his death ride to the Green Chapel. Drawn from five connecting lines, the pentangle, a five-pointed star, was also known as the endless knot.

Although a mental exercise, to the medieval Christian, reading the passage of the pentangle would be both a joy and a pleasure. The pure gold of Sir Gawain's pentangle would have been seen to the readers as representing the purity of knighthood and of Sir Gawain himself, while the endless knot could be seen as representing, among other things, the courteousness of Gawain and the infinity of God. Just as love knots bind lovers, so does the endless knot bind Gawain to his Holy Father.

Jesus Christ told his followers to become the lights of the world and to shine like a city upon a hill. A thoughtful reader could discover Sir Gawain to have done both of these things. Sir Gawain's five-pointed symbol, worn in view of the world, represented his virtues that shone as a golden star before all. Stars, such as the star which was followed by the wise men of the New Testament, were used in the medieval world to guide travellers. It is interesting to note that writers oftentimes compare life to a long journey. Thus, Sir Gawain, the knight who was found not even to hold sin in his five fingers, the knight who was known to possess no fault in his five senses, the knight who was known to hold no allegiance to anyone but the five-wounded Christ, the knight who

derived his strength from the five joys of Mary, shone his star before the world and guided others through the journey of life.

Of course, these four major attributes of Sir Gawain had a fifth partner. "The fifth of the five fives followed by the knight" was symbolized by the pentangle's five points. Each point represented a virtue. Boundless beneficence, brotherly love, purity in mind, goodness in manners, and compassion most precious sat at the pentangle's tip and were bound together in the endless knot. Like the three-in-one Holy Trinity, the pentangle became five-in-one and established the fifth of Gawain's noble virtues which in turn became one with each other, making Gawain whole and pure.

The repetition of the number five and its relation to Sir Gawain is interesting, but one wonders what made the author of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* choose it instead of another "magical" number. What made five so special?

One possible explanation is that Leo the Lion represents the number five in astrology. Lions are always depicted as strong and brave, qualities held by Sir Gawain. Leo the Lion has come to represent, too, the virtues of having an honourable soul and of having a noble heart.

An old wife's tale brings about another possible explanation. Often it is said that someone is "true blue" meaning that his heart is steadfastly committed to a cause. Is it surprising then that blue is attributed to being the colour of the number five?

Whether the myth of Leo the Lion, the superstition that the only colour for five was the honourable colour of blue, the belief that five stood for truth, or whether parts of all of these possible explanations on why the author of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* decided upon the number five as his symbolic number will never truly be known. The tale itself, however, will continue to entertain and to stretch both the minds and the imaginations of readers. The symbols wait to tell about Sir Gawain. They need only to be discovered.

**Jena Melancon
Brookhaven High School
Scholarship Award**

Our Lady Cries For Help!

The sun was just beginning to rise as the ship made its way into New York Harbor Bay. The ship was a melting pot full of immigrants from far away lands filled with high hopes for a new life in a land they called America.

As the sky lightens up with its first rays of sunlight you could hear the excitement in the voices of the people on board. A silent hush went through the crowd when they saw for the first time "The Statue of Liberty." She was standing there with open arms, welcoming them to America. It was as if she were crying with silent lips:

Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses,
Yearning to be free.
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these the homeless tempest tost to me.
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.

The Statue of Liberty has lightened the pathway to America for ninety-eight years. But now she has a different cry, a cry for help, for elements of time have taken their toll on Miss Liberty. She is in serious need of reconstruction, and she is turning once again to America for help.

On close inspection you will find her brow is pockmarked with holes. The iron bars that support the statue's copper skin have deteriorated. The iron's contact with copper has resulted in electrolysis, a process that dissolves metal.¹

Miss Liberty's arm holding the torch seems to sag a bit; it has been swaying since 1916. Her arm and torch are the most badly damaged sections of the statue. Architects have found out that the arm was improperly connected at the shoulder, when Miss Liberty was built.²

"Liberty Enlightening the World," was the name Frederic Auguste Bartholdi first gave to the statue while he was designing and building her. It took Bartholdi eight and one-half years to build the statue and 214 cases to ship her to America. The Statue of Liberty, a gift from France, symbolizes freedom and friendship.

The statue represents a proud woman, dressed in a loose robe that falls in graceful folds to the top of the pedestal on which the statue stands. The right arm is raised holding a torch, while the left arm grasps a tablet bearing the date of the Declaration of Independence. She wears a crown with huge spikes, like sun rays. At her feet is a broken shackle symbolizing the overthrow of tyranny.³

While Bartholdi was building the statue, a cry went out for help in

America. Money was badly needed to build her pedestal. America answered her needs by raising \$100,000 to build her pedestal. The unveiling took place on October 28, 1886, and Miss Liberty has since welcomed millions to her land of freedom.

In 1986, the Statue of Liberty will celebrate her 100th birthday. All America is joining in to help her look her best. On the Fourth of July, 1984, President Reagan officially launched the grass-roots' campaign on national television. The refurbishing will cost thirty million dollars, almost forty times the bill for construction and installment in the 1880's. All thirty million will come from private donation.

When President Reagan learned the grim news about Lady Liberty, he could have responded by asking Congress to appropriate the millions needed to restore the Lady. But President Reagan knew the statue was not built with government money, so he asked Americans to join in a tremendous national effort to rescue her—and to rededicate the nation to the value she represents.⁴

President Reagan was convinced that even in difficult times America would join together to respond to an appeal to restore the Lady to her original beauty and strength.

Chrysler Chairman Lee Iacocca, whose Italian immigrant father sailed past the statue in 1902, was asked by the President to form a federal advisory commission to organize fund raising. The twenty-member commission, which includes Bob Hope, and former president of the United Auto Workers Union Douglas Fraser, found the job of a fund raising campaign to be both rewarding and enjoyable.

Before the campaign was even officially launched, people began responding. Bridgeport, Connecticut, concluded that a gift to Miss Liberty was a perfect way to say thank-you to America. America had helped Bridgeport out early in December 1982 when a local toy center was destroyed by arson. This center had been used to help give poor children a Christmas. Money came from all over America to help restore the center before the holiday. And, now, this was a way they could say thank-you. Bridgeport raised \$3600 for the Statue of Liberty, all of this from private donations.⁵

In schools across America young children are reaching out to do their share by holding fairs, car washes, sales, and using their imagination to help raise money. Their campaign entitled "SOS," (Save Our Statue), has brought about \$250,000 in contributions. All schools that contribute will receive a certificate of appreciation to be displayed at the museum of the statue.

Adult groups have equally been enthusiastic. The Veterans of Foreign Wars, of Hicksville, New York, held a casino night that raised more than \$1100. Jersey City's Business and Professional Women's Club

has begun collecting what it hopes will be tens of thousands of pennies under the slogan: "Copper pennies for the restoration of the copper gown of Lady Liberty."⁶

Big companies are also answering her cry. Businesses are finding that people feel better about spending money through them if they are supporting a good cause, like the reconstruction of the statue.

American Express Card has earmarked one penny of every credit card transaction and one dollar for each new cardmember for the Miss Liberty campaign. Brendon Ryan, senior vice-president and group director for the campaign for American Express says, "While the Liberty ads are not primarily intended to generate good will, there is no question that they do make people feel good about the company."⁷

Matthew Houpt, of The Skoal Tobacco Company of North Carolina, stated proudly that they have raised ten million dollars toward the Lady. In addition Mr. Houpt pointed out that all race cars supported by his company bear the Miss Liberty emblem.⁸

The Nestle Corporation has designed a commemorative statue of solid milk chocolate to help raise money for our Lady. The statue is richly detailed and richly delicious: she's sure to melt hearts. For every unit that is sold the people at Nestle will contribute twenty-five cents to the statue.⁹

Because of all these efforts, Miss Liberty has taken on a new look. Scaffolds are weaving their way around her allowing workmen to heal her ailing skin. It will take two years to complete the project, working from the inside out. The inside will be changed completely with the most striking change being the hollowing out of much of the colossal 154 foot high base; this will return the interior to its original vast proportions.¹⁰

Also, on the list of improvements is a new emergency elevator. Surveying for the new elevator was very important, engineers relied on a special application of laser beam technology. The elevator will travel a vertical distance of 250 feet from one shoulder to the statue's base, between her skeleton and her gown.¹¹

The most badly damaged section is the arm holding the torch. The torch, itself, will be completely reconstructed with the original one being placed in a museum. The arm which is unstable will be worked on in place.

The statue was originally reddish brown. When copper corrodes, it forms a protective green film called patina or corroding.¹² The washing off of the patina on the 300 copper plates that form the 151-foot statue's outer skin and the placing of a protective coating that will protect her from further pollution will be the final task in her reconstruction.

Almost half of all living Americans can trace their family histories to the arrival of a ship at nearby Ellis Island. Many of the men working

on Lady Liberty recall stories of how their families came to America. Angelo Bommarido, foreman of the reconstruction crew, remembers the first time he saw the Lady. "Seventeen years ago, I saw the Statue of Liberty at 3 o'clock in the morning." He said, "I was on the boat coming over from Sicily. There were six of us—me, my three brothers and my mother and father. My mother woke us all up. 'La Statua,' she said, 'Look how beautiful she is.'"¹²

Mr. Bommarido recalled how tears welled up in his eyes as he raised his head to look at the statue. As the ship went passed her she held her torch up high, and it raised their heads and their hearts. She seemed to be saying to them, "Come be part of my country."¹³

If you would like to join America in one of the most historic endeavors of her time, you can do so by mailing your contribution to:

STATUE OF LIBERTY-ELLIS ISLAND
FOUNDATION, INC.
P. O. BOX LIBERTY
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10117

In return for your contribution you will be listed in the **Statue of Liberty Register of Contributors**. This historic register will be entered in the archives of the Statue of Liberty National Monument Museum, where it will be on permanent display. Also, you will receive a unique certificate authorized by the Foundation with your name engraved on it.

In making your contribution you must remember that America is trying to keep a Lady alive who has symbolized to America its desire to be free.

On October 28, 1986, The Statue of Liberty will celebrate her 100th birthday with a grand celebration. Tall sailing ships from all over the world that made our Bicentennial so memorable have been invited for another visit. The heads of state from dozens of countries will be on hand. The Army and Marines will parade, Navy ships will boom out salutes and Air Force jets will zoom overhead as a rejuvenated and rededicated Lady of Liberty declares America's lasting freedom.

The Statue of Liberty is one of our most precious monuments. She belongs to all of us, and it is our responsibility to keep her light shining beside the golden door to America.

NOTES

¹"Learning About Lady Liberty," **Instructor and Teacher**, February 1984, pp. 52-57.

²"Saving the Queen," **Newsweek**, 1 August 1983, p. 33

³"Statue of Liberty," **World Book**, 1973.

⁴"Save the Statue of Liberty," **Readers Digest**, July 1983, pp. 49, 51, 53.

⁵"Save The Statue of Liberty," pp. 50, 51.

⁷"AmEx Raises Corporate Giving to Marketing Act," **Advertising Age**, 23 January 1984, pp. m10-m14.

⁸Personal interview, 6 October 1984, Jackson, Mississippi.

⁹"Nestle, Makes the Very Best; Fund Raising," **CO-ED**, November/December 1984, p. 15.

¹⁰"Learning About Liberty," p. 56.

¹¹"Learning About Liberty," p. 56.

¹²Peter Carlson, "Miss Liberty's Restorers Place Her Under Intensive Care," **People**, 9 July 1984, pp. 61-64.

¹³Angelo Bommarito, "Lady Liberty Gave me Hope - Now I'm Helping Her Stand Tall," **National Enquirer**, 27 November 1984, p. 42.

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Brenda Brewer

Second Place, Formal Essay

Honorable Mention, MJCCWA Competition

Grief, Joy, Grief

In Kate Chopin's "The Story of an Hour" the character Mrs. Mallard has heart trouble and the news of her husband's death apparently shocks her. In this very brief story Chopin shows the contrasting emotions of grief and joy as Mrs. Mallard experiences them.

Mrs. Mallard's first grief is brief. When she learns of her husband's death, her sister tries to comfort her and is very concerned because of the heart problem, but Mrs. Mallard wishes to be alone and she goes upstairs to her room. While she is there, her thoughts quickly turn from those of grief and death as she sits in a chair and stares out the window: "at the tree tops all aquiver with new spring life . . . the delicious breath of rain in the air . . . a peddler crying his wares . . . notes of a distant song which someone is singing . . . and countless sparrows fluttering about." Unfortunately, her grief will later return when she sees her husband alive. This grief will stop her weak heart.

With these descriptions of setting in mind Chopin prepares the reader and Mrs. Mallard for the shift from grief to joy. At first the realization of her joy frightens her because she does not know what is happening or why it is happening. Ultimately, Mrs. Mallard sees herself and her new freedom in its true light. She is free. Her eyes stay keen and bright as she says it over and over under her breath: "free, free, free!" She begins to make plans for herself and she dreams of the years ahead where no one will be there to live for her: she will live for herself. For the first time in her life Mrs. Mallard begins to live. While others experience the initiation into life much earlier, Mrs. Mallard's "life" begins late.

Now just as Mrs. Mallard is joyous over her new found freedom, her new life, Chopin prepares us for her second and final grief which is fatal. Mrs. Mallard's sister is worried about her because she will not open the door, but when she does she is not the grief-stricken wife her sister expected to see. She has a look of feverish triumph in her eyes and she walks like a "goddess of Victory" as they descend the stairs. When they reach the bottom, someone is opening the door with a latchkey and in walks Mr. Mallard. After the doctors come and examine her, they say she has died of heart disease—"of joy that kills." Yet the reader knows Mrs. Mallard's joy was grief because she had seen her husband and she realizes she has lost her new found freedom, her new life.

Cindy Alexander

Characterization of the Boy in "Araby"

"Araby" is the story of a boy's vanity. James Joyce, the author, uses the young boy's infatuation with a girl to illustrate the reality that reveals the uselessness of many childhood dreams.

The boy, who remains nameless throughout the story, is very much a boy. He has a group of friends in his neighborhood, and they take part in their boyish games. He looks at the world through the eyes of a child—naive, not seeing the possibility of failure in anything. This quality causes him a lot of grief, and yet it teaches him a valuable lesson about life.

Although the boy is still very much like a child, he is experiencing something characteristic of an older person. He is obsessed with the older sister of one of his friends. The boy is so infatuated with this girl that she dominates his every thought. His life really comes to revolve around the girl. Every morning he would watch for her to leave for school, and when she left, he always followed her. He often found himself saying prayers about the girl. When the boy and his aunt go to the rough, noisy market, he imagines that he "bore his chalice safely through a throng of foes." This signifies that the thought of her remained constant in his mind and nothing could take it away.

The boy's main problem is not being in love, but the fact that he is scared to talk to the girl. One day, though, he overcomes his shyness and has a conversation with her. During the conversation she brings up Araby, an oriental bazaar. She says she had wanted to go to it, but she couldn't. The boy says he might go, and if he does he would bring her something. This makes his situation worse because he becomes worthless in the days before the bazaar. He thinks of nothing but the bazaar and what he will get for the girl.

The day of the bazaar finally comes. Delayed by his uncle's coming home late, the boy is late for the bazaar. As he arrives it is closing.

At this point a very painful truth is revealed to the boy. He finally sees himself "as a creature driven and derided by vanity." All that time the boy had been so madly in love with the girl that he had overlooked the fact that his cause was utterly hopeless. He had failed to see that all his thoughts, all his emotions, and all his time were being spent in vain.

Joyce treats this character as if he had gone through the same experience himself. Although the story is not about Joyce, there are some details in the story which were a part of his own life. He treats the events in the story as if he knew of them first-hand. This first-hand approach plays a major role in bringing the character and his situation to life.

Jay Holliday

Copiah Academy

Second Place, Formal Essay

The Hemingway Code Hero

Ernest Hemingway's writing contains many concepts, but the most characteristic of his work is the concept of the Hemingway man or code hero. Hemingway's writings were enthusiastically received by the readers of his day. The concept of the code hero was largely responsible for this phenomena because the character's life-style appealed strongly to the people of the Nineteen Twenties. These people were disillusioned with traditional Western society and were searching for new concepts and attitudes.

The code hero was a character who was involved in various activities in which the typical American male did not participate. He was a character who was involved in a great deal of drinking and who moved from one love affair to another. He was often a bullfighter, a soldier, or a wild game hunter, each of whom faced death daily.

Underlying the concept of the code hero is the disillusionment of the general public brought about by World War I. The people of this day realized that the traditional values inherent in Christianity and other ethical systems had not saved mankind from the atrocities of the First World War. The writers of this period began looking for a new set of values to replace the traditional Christian values that they believed had failed. Hemingway was at the forefront of this movement as he searched for a new set of rules and values based on order and discipline that would endure in any situation.

The concept of death is the foundation for the actions of the Hemingway code hero. This concept lies behind all of the hero's actions. It is an extension of Hemingway's belief that "when you are dead you are dead." There is no afterlife—nothing else. This means that man must emphasize obtaining or doing or performing something while he is still alive. Hemingway referred to this as "carpe diem" which means "seize the day." Consequently, the code hero devotes himself to the gratification of carnal desires because these are the rewards offered in this life. This allows the code hero to live life at the fullest, attaining as much happiness and satisfaction as possible.

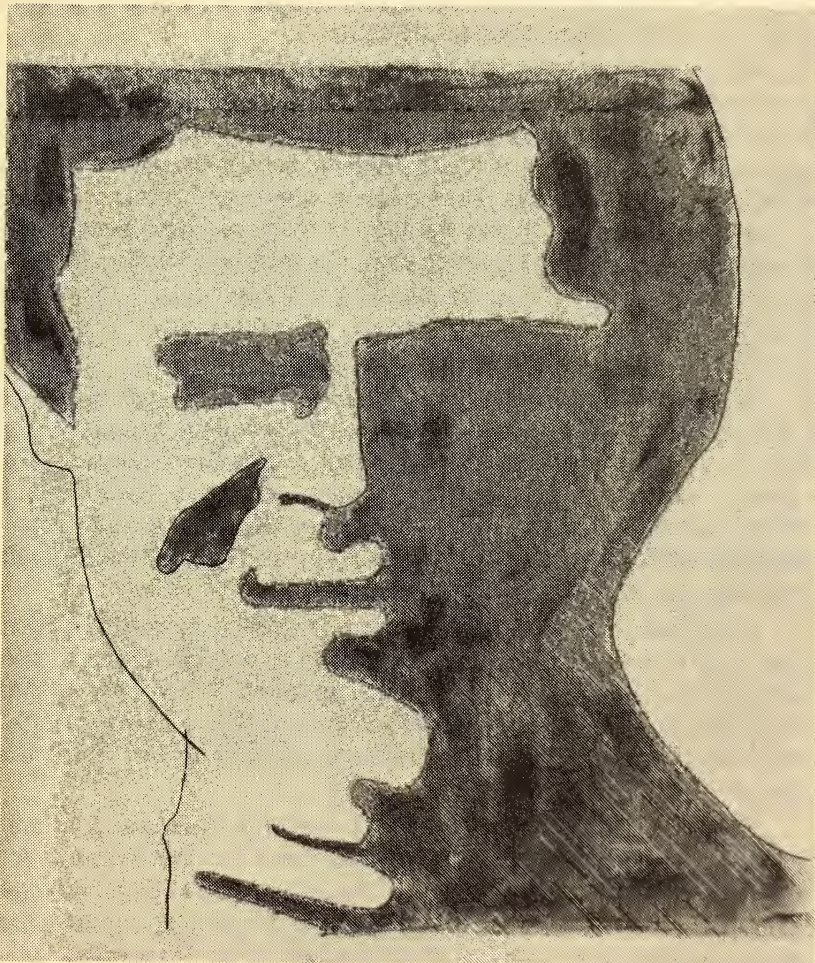
Since death is the end of all things, the code hero must avoid death at almost any cost. It may seem strange, considering this view, that the code hero often confronts death. These confrontations serve as a showcase of the code hero's disciplined set of rules toward death. The code hero must not fear dying, but he realizes that death is the end and that it must be avoided if possible.

The code hero can never show cowardice. He must stand bravely

and proudly in the face of death. By this stance, the code hero shows the coolness, the grace, the courage, and the discipline that make him Hemingway's ideal man.

The Hemingway code hero is a character shaped largely by changing philosophies in the Nineteen Twenties. He is a character who adheres to a strict set of rules concerning death, but who lives life freely. He seeks to get the most from life while he is here while retaining at all times "grace under pressure." For the character to become the code hero he must confront death and defeat it, while not fearing it.

Art Kergosien
Brookhaven High School
Third Place, Formal Essay



Robert Hawkins

A Pair of Trousers

Seemingly unimportant events in our childhood sometimes make such impressions on us that we remember them always. A pair of long trousers, when considered in isolation, seems to be a totally insignificant object, but when I see a young boy dressed for church or school in long trousers, I invariably recall my own boyhood problems with them.

I must have been about seven or eight years old when I first realized that I was different — all of my friends wore long trousers to school, but I didn't. The most popular type of trousers at the time was made out of khaki material and was worn with a wide belt and a brightly colored shirt which never seemed to match.

My grandmother, for reasons that I did not discover until several years later, thought that all young boys should wear knickers or shorts in public, with a matching shirt and socks. Consequently, I owned several pairs of knickers in every conceivable color, each with its very own matching shirt and long socks. The knickers, when worn "properly" bagged just over the knee, hiding the tops of their matching socks inside the elastic legs. My shorts, which were almost as numerous, were saved for wear at home unless the washing and ironing got behind. Then they were pressed into service for school and church wear, unless I was able to skip school or church by pretending to be sick.

To compound my problems, I was a fat, dumpy, shy child and was extremely self-conscious. Decked out in my knickers, I reminded one older boy of a popular cartoon character of the day, Humphrey Pennyworth, and he started calling me "Hump" as a joke. Later, when he and the others found out how much I hated the nickname, it became a permanent label. After a few months, I learned to ignore the nickname and resigned myself to wearing knickers.

Even though I was different looking, the knickers were a welcome alternative to the shorts and I secretly prayed for good weather and punctual ironing — every day. But it finally happened. There were no clean knickers one morning and I was sent to school in a pair of shorts, a matching shirt and socks, and wearing my newest pair of leather low-quarter shoes.

Before the school bus came, the comments started and for some reason, the nickname just rubbed me the wrong way that morning. After several taunts and pinches on my exposed legs, I grabbed the biggest boy in the group and we went at it; pushing, shoving and maybe even landing a blow once or twice in all the confusion. During the fight, I somehow managed to scuff both of the toes on my new shoes and to

get dirt all over my shorts and shirt. But even the fear of my grandmother's wrath for ruining my shoes did not dampen my elation at finally fighting back. I can't remember whether I won or not and winning was questionable, but I will never forget the different tone in the voices of the boys when they called my nickname and I never heard shorts mentioned again.

That small victory did not lessen my hatred of shorts and knickers, however, and I dreaded to go to school every morning like it was the end of the world. I only thought about the hours ahead until I could get back home, away from the others.

The months dragged by, each longer than the last it seemed, and nothing I said to my grandmother about wanting long trousers seemed to sink in. She would always change the subject or ignore my pleas and tell me over and over how cute knickers looked on small boys. But that Christmas morning I had two pairs of long khaki trousers lying under the Christmas tree, neatly folded with a note from Santa on top. To my knowledge, I never wore shorts or knickers in public again.

Years later, when I was going through some old pictures, I came across two photographs of my father as a young boy, proudly holding a small dog. Sure enough, he was all dressed up, in knickers, and I finally understood why my grandmother always wanted me to wear them too. It was her way of re-living my father's childhood.

Now that I am older, I can rationalize events and look back on those months without feeling the frustration and helpless anger at being singled out as different by the other boys. But I have kept one resolution that I made years ago. I have never dressed my son in a pair of knickers — MAY KNICKERS REST IN PEACE!

Maurice Cammack
First Place, Informal Essay

Formal Essays

Formal essays are possibly the assignments (besides term papers and science projects) most dreaded by high school students. Have you ever heard a student say anything good about an essay? In my opinion there are three major (and several dozen minor) reasons why we hate essays so: the introduction, the body, and the conclusion.

First let's discuss the introduction. Mine are usually terribly boring and unoriginal. What do you need introductions for anyway? You don't need to tell whoever's going to read your essay what you're writing about; they'll figure that out by reading it. The thesis sentence has got to be the worst part of the introduction! How are you supposed to capsule what you're going to write on two pages in one sentence; and, if it's going to simply state everything you intend to write, why can't you just write a thesis sentence and be done with the thing? Huh?

Then there's the "ever-popular" body of the essay, where you proceed to support your thesis sentence in at least three paragraphs. Absolutely nothing could be more exciting. It always seems that I might be able to elaborate on the thesis sentence in one paragraph, but three? It never fails that I run out of things to say in the first paragraph and simply, awkwardly repeat myself throughout the next two! With such stumbling and bumbling in the biggest part of the essay, the body assures you that you're on your way to an "A."

Last but certainly not least there is the conclusion. In my opinion the conclusion is the hardest part of the entire essay. The conclusion restates the introduction and says that you proved the point of the introduction in the body. There are two problems with this: 1) it's quite nearly impossible to restate the introduction without using the same words; and 2) it never fails that I forget to put something pertinent into the body, and it is a definite no-no to stick something in at the end. It's not a good idea to try to disguise the fact that you're adding something in unless you're not doing the essay for an English teacher.

If you're doing the essay for your history teacher or your biology teacher, they'll never know and probably don't care; but if you're doing it for your English teacher forget it! They'll know and care every time!

So those are some, but certainly not all of the reasons why we dislike essays. Is there anything good to say about them? Well, maybe: Perseverance through trial builds character.

**Kim Weathersby
Brookhaven High School
First Place, Informal Essay**

A Childhood Not Quite Forgotten

People say a childhood can't be regained, but sometimes, I wish I could capture it once more if only for a day. Being an adult, or at least being considered an adult by others, seems to bring on extra worries and burdens I never had as a child.

Looking back, all I seem to remember of my childhood summers are lazy days spent sweating under the sun while playing out the roles of my childhood heroes. Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer were the most frequent visitors of my imagination. Wearing tattered overalls that had been rescued from the "rag box" at least a dozen times, my brother and I would spend many afternoons fishing with cane poles and making rafts by the pond. Rafts seemed to always be the main hindrance of our fulfilling our dreams of really becoming Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer. No matter how many we made, or how many different ways we made them, they never floated for more than one trip across the pond. I believe, that if counted, I would be able to find at least twenty rafts decaying on the muddy floor of our pond. Rotting reminders of lost, but sweet, childhood dreams.

My summers now have such a different pace to them. Each morning, whether rain or shine, I go to work at Rolling Hills Country Club. All day I deal with either irate golfers or extremely happy golfers who, either way, make too much noise. One complains about his golf swing; while another one tells how great he is hitting the ball. Men demand that I find them a golf cart even though every one we have is rented out. Women wonder why the grass is so thick and why don't the workers cut it; and to all of their questions, I must find an answer. After a day like this, I beg for those hot, lazy days once more.

Even though I had to go to school during the winter, my elementary days seemed like a fun dream. Teachers gave us fun assignments such as: coloring the girl without getting out of the lines, cutting pieces of paper up to make snowflakes, and making presents to send home so our mother would have to find room on the refrigerator for one more work of art. Going home after school was also special. Momma would be in the kitchen making us doughnuts and hot chocolate. She was always ready to listen to all of our daily happenings as we ate. Then she would help us with our homework, send us out to play, and then, promptly at eight o'clock, send us all to bed.

College is such a stark contrast to my never-changing elementary

days. Classes are so much harder, and for some reason, we never seem to spend any time making gifts for our mothers. Each day when I go back to my dorm room I look in the refrigerator and yes, it's all still there: four Tabs, one half-eaten Slow Poke, and five apples packed by my mother. I look around for hot chocolate and doughnuts but, once again, I'm disappointed. In the evenings I try to study, but there are thousands of things going on. The girls across the hall are making popcorn, a good show is on, my boyfriend calls, and finally I'm invited to come to another room and listen to some new tapes. Somehow I miss the ten o'clock bedtime I set for myself, eleven slips by, midnight passes unnoticed, until finally, at one o'clock, we all seem to mutually head to our rooms to catch what sleep we can.

Thus, life seems to have changed drastically for me since my carefree childhood. I have to finish college; I must choose an occupation, and one day I must start a regular job. Now though, when things get to be too much, I just visit my childhood, if only for a day.

Barbara Boone
Second Place, Informal Essay
Honorable Mention, MJCCWA Competition

Music: Heart and Soul

Music is an expression of heart and soul. It reflects feelings of love, fear, hate, sorrow, and happiness. When we turn on our radios and listen to songs, we move to the music and sing with the melody. But do we really know what music does to us? Music is all around us—at dances, at weddings, in stores, in cars, and many more places.

Since the world is made of many different people, we have many types of music to satisfy each person. Each type of music expresses a different feeling to us, so let us now lie back and relish some thrills of music.

One of the greatest thrills is lifting of our spirit. When we are down and depressed, we put on some Michael Jackson or Prince and feel like dancing. If a boyfriend breaks up with us or he is off at school, we play some Chicago or Lionel Richie and cry in our pillows all night wishing he was in our arms. Many people such as our parents listen to slow, contemporary music when they want to unwind from a hard day at work or when they just want to relax.

In addition to making us get in or out of moods, music enhances special times and events in the year. What would Christmas be like without Christmas songs? We know we love to cuddle with someone we love, watch the Christmas tree lights twinkle, and listen to Christmas songs because they fill us with the peace and harmony of the season. Imagine Christmas parties and New Years Eve parties without music to lift our spirits and make us dance. We must not forget “Old Lang Syne” that brings in the new year. Music is so much a part of our lives. It is all around us.

When we walk into a department store, we hear slow, classical music. When we go into a business office, we hear the local radio station playing the top ten hits of the week. If we really think about it, we can not live without music. When we wake up in the morning to get ready for school, we turn on our stereos, wake up the whole house, and jump in the shower. After we get out of the shower, we prepare our wardrobe based on the weather forecast. If we are in a daring mood, we dress like the image of our favorite singer. Somehow we barely make it to three o'clock without hearing a single tune; but as soon as the bell rings we load up in our cars, turn on the radio as loud as it will go, and cruise the boulevard. Finally, we go home, but just as we pull in our driveway our favorite song comes on. We jump out of the car, sprint to our bedroom, and turn on the radio so we won't miss a beat.

As the evening progresses we must choose between homework and

music; so, we decide on a compromise. We listen to music while doing math, and we don't listen to it while doing history since we really need to concentrate. Before we go to bed, we turn the music down low and go to sleep. It is clear that music lives with us constantly.

Remember the high school dances, the parties, and the prom. Music was a part of it all. Young or old, music sparks cherished memories and makes new ones. Music is the reflection of our inner selves. It expresses our feelings and desires. Without a doubt it is heart and soul.

Becky Hillman
Brookhaven High School
Second Place, Informal Essay

Spring **1985**



MICROCOSM

GGA

Gayle Anders

Adults Are Responsible For Children

Children should be the most prized possessions of the world. However, many children grow up and mature with the attitude of no hope for tomorrow. Life is a constant failure for them. They fail to live up to their own aspirations, and they fail to live up to others' expectations. They fall victim to discouragement, to temptations, and to fears. They are unable even to deal with life, to say nothing of achieving victory in it. As a result of these failures, children run from pressures that they can no longer face; some even consider suicide at an early age. All of these problems are faced by many children all over the world, especially in the United States.

Because of the lack of personal or career guidance, children fail to live up to their own aspirations or others' expectations. When many children are very young, they decide on an occupation or career that they would like to pursue. However, the children receive discouraging remarks from adults, or adults never listen to their ideas. As a result, the children believe that no one cares for them. Instead, the adults try to force their ideas into the minds of the children, thereby making the children believe that their own ideas are not important. Often times, children do not live up to others' expectations because of unhappiness brought on by adults' failure to appreciate their choices and ideas.

There are children who do make their own choices in careers or occupations, but because of improper education, they fall short of their goals. Once children attend primary and secondary schools, they continue on to even higher learning areas. However, some discover after graduating that they are unable to find or to hold a job. They have gained an educational background, but they cannot understand the many trials of everyday life. This results in a feeling of even more discouragement.

Another major problem that children have to deal with is peer pressure. One prime example is drugs. Some are brainwashed into taking drugs, which destroy them mentally, emotionally, and physically, and which cause them to fear the future because half of their lives have been wasted. It is difficult for many children to be independent thinkers when they are faced with so much peer pressure.

Adults must begin to deal with this feeling of hopelessness that children are experiencing. Leaders should consider the welfare of the children because they are the future leaders. Programs of interest should be set up for children which will aid the youth in positive thinking and self worth. Parental guidance and career guidance should deal with atmosphere and motivation for the desire for striving and achieving. The view of children today is a look at the leaders of the year 2000.

**Pamela Francisco
Brookhaven High School
Third Place, Informal Essay**

Dissolution

The cool December breeze broke the stillness of the early morning as it rustled the dry leaves. The breeze penetrated my heavy clothing and sent a chill throughout my body. As the sun slowly rose from the east, it brought with it a dim glow that settled over the rye grass field.

My eyes were slowly adjusting to see in the early morning light. From my tree stand in the big oak, I had a good view of the field that lay in front of me. The tall sage that surrounded the field swayed back and forth with the breeze.

I waited in intense anticipation for the big buck that I had been hunting to come into the field. I knew that odds were against me, but I had that ray of hope. The buck was smart and had been around for many years.

He was cautious and spooky, always testing the wind for signs of danger. Twice, I had caught glimpses of the magnificent animal as he eased through the woods, but I had not yet had the opportunity for a good clean shot. The buck had become a part of my life for the last two years. I hunted him every time I had a chance during the season, and I scouted the area during the closed season to learn his habits and feeding areas, but so far, my work had not paid off.

As my eyes focused on the field, I caught a glimpse of movement in the far corner. I watched intently as a large doe eased her way out of the sage. I watched her while she smelled to test the wind for danger. The wind was blowing in my direction, so I had no fear of her smelling me. When she was satisfied that all was safe, she started nibbling on the green grass. Suddenly the doe jerked her head up and stared towards the other corner of the field. When I saw him, I started to shake. There he was, my buck, that I had been hunting for two years. The buck looked in my direction and sniffed the air. He suddenly disappeared, just as he had come. A sick feeling came over me. I knew I had lost my chance.

As I looked towards the other corner of the field, I noticed the doe was staring behind her and into the sage. A ray of hope came over me. The buck made his way into the field. He never looked up; he just nibbled at the green grass. I placed the cross hairs of my .30-06 on his front shoulders and fired. Down he fell. He made no effort to get back up; he never kicked.

After I get down from my tree stand a funny feeling came over me. As I looked across the field I could see the big buck lying at the edge of the field. It hurt me to see the beautiful animal dead. Many a day

I had hunted this buck, and now there he lay motionless. I knew the buck had been the king of the swamps and pastures that he had roamed for so long. No more would I be able to follow his tracks and scout for his scrapes. I knew. I had lost something that had been a part of my life.

Wade Alexander

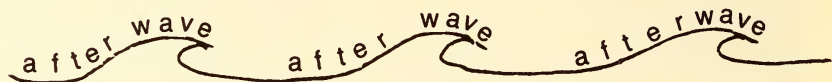


Sam Hathorn

Discovery

The wound of my soul is painfully exposed to the salt. Shafts of sun-light penetrate, the heat ministering like a soothing balm. I lose myself in grandeur of ocean and healing of sun. How good it feels to be touched, caressed by surf and sun.

Diamonds. Brilliant! Iridescent sparkles bouncing off the water ripples. Off the many facets of wave



of foaming surf.

Where do the waves come from? Will they ever end? Like so many questions I have, I'm still waiting for answers to them.

Coconut fragrance. Sea and salt spray. Squinting my eyes a blaze of sparkles all run together into a complete dazzle in broken shafts of splintered light. I close my eyes and hear ocean sounds of sea gulls and water crashing. Sounds that some describe as, "ROOOoooooooooar and CRASH! or SHHHHHHHHHHHhhhhhhhh and SPLASH." But these words are not adequate to describe the painting with words or the sounds of the sea that I hear.

Gazing, my eyes level with the waves, I see the roll, then the spray and the water washes over me. I lick the salt on my lips. Churning. Heaving. Foaming. A steady pulse. I feel the ocean's heartbeat; or is it only mine? Awesome. Massive. Surging energy. Dependable, yet unpredictable. Ever exhilarating. Never to be taken for granted. Appreciated. Enjoyed. Entered into. Explored again and again. Treasured. Remembered, but never ignored. A woman. An ocean.

The tiny fish, small and quick like silver bullets, dart about transparent and unnoticed as my tears roll and drop like pearls disappearing into a sea of unfulfilled dreams.

Peals of laughter echo as man and wife share. A never ending ache, a longing as an anchor weights my heart and won't let my heart's ship go. Like a fish out of water struggling for breath, I am tangled in a net of memories and regrets.

I look up and into your eyes; I take your outstretched hand. You are full of compassion with your Galilee tan. Intimate thoughts to share, talking it out; such treasures. I am a new sailor, you know; teach me the ways of the sea. How to live, how to trust, how to please.

My heart leaps within as the waves

keep coming
and keep coming
and keep coming

faithfully

promising joyous expectancy for this moment and continuous beyond today.

I glory in your presence, the mysterious creation. Overhead the fluff of white clouds scatters over the intense blue of the sky. Underneath the sea supports me, as your arms, and looking up your hand engulfs all I see, and think, and feel. I am full.

You don't answer all my questions, yet your presence, searched for and found, is more than enough. The secret of the ages, the treasure of treasures, — here — holding my suntanned hand. Were you here all the time, you pearl of great price? I will breathe deeply, take you into myself, fill my sails with the wind of the Spirit, allow you to lift the heavy weight of the anchor . . . my heart launches out, surges forward, and I discover I am sailing free.

Barbara Black

The Wall

The only illumination for the yard came from the front porch light. Brightly-colored balloons and long, crepe paper streamers hung along the porch railing. Several people were standing near the porch when I arrived. Most were strangers to me. Dolly had primarily invited friends from her church to her fourteenth birthday party. I was an exception.

One boy caught my eye immediately. He was taller than the others, his hair was neatly combed, his clothes were clean and pressed, and his brown eyes were looking directly at me! I felt a strange, new, warm feeling. I wondered if he could possibly be interested in me.

Others arrived. We sat on the grass in two groups, the girls here and the boys there. He was looking at me again as if he wanted to speak. The strange, new feeling was growing.

"Dolly," I whispered, cupping my hand over my mouth. "Who is the tall one?"

"That's Ted," she replied. "He's quiet. Isn't he good-looking? He's been watching you."

"No, it must be Sandra," I said, referring to the girl sitting behind me.

I looked at the clear night sky with its bright, twinkling stars and its new moon. I looked at Dolly's tabby cat patiently grooming her sleeping kittens. I looked into the next yard where the neighbors were barbecuing hamburgers. I looked everywhere except at Ted.

"Attention, everyone! It's time for games," announced Dolly.

"Let's play spin-the-bottle," suggested Sandra.

I sat frozen. Spin-the-bottle meant holding hands, walking around the house in the dark, and what else? A kiss? What if I had to walk with Ted? What if it wasn't Ted? Confusing thoughts tumbled around in my head.

When his turn came, Ted spun the bottle vigorously. It stopped, pointing to the empty space between Sandra and me. With a soft smile, he turned it toward me. Almost before I knew what had happened, he pulled me to my feet, and we were walking around the house.

We went quietly the first time, my hand warm in his, my heart pounding. The second time, we talked about school, where we lived, and our families. I relaxed slightly. The third time, Ted bent to kiss me. Alarmed, I turned my head. His lips barely brushed my cheek. Abruptly, he turned and went to his truck, leaving me alone in the darkness. I had lost him because I could not be what he wanted me to be.

"What happened?" demanded Dolly as she came running around

the house.

"I wouldn't kiss him. He got mad and left," I explained.

"You're a stupid child," she chided. "He liked you. Now, you'll never see him again."

Ted's rejection added another brick to the wall I was carefully building around myself. The wall protected me from the cruel darts of hurt unwittingly hurled by thoughtless people. Dolly's rebuke was an additional brick.

Through the years, the wall became tall and solid. However, God's powerful love began to work on the wall, gently and carefully taking it down. He sent beautiful, caring people into my life who showed me His love by accepting me as I was.

Now, as He heals my wounds, He is patiently removing the wall brick by brick. I am becoming the unafraid, useful, loving person He wants me to be.

Lucille O. Crosby

Mr. Claude

Mr. Claude was a simple, yet unique man. A distinctive sort of gentleman who stood strong to support the beliefs he lived by and one who found pleasure in simple things.

On Sunday, in a tiny rural church, a stately old gentleman with a slight limp slowly made his way down the aisle to the front pew. His thinning hair, once flaming red, was neatly trimmed and snowy white. He sat leaning forward with his hand cupped to his ear straining to hear each word. His fair skin, warm with freckles, was in contrast to his heavy rimmed glasses. Mr. Claude found pleasure in many ways, but attending church was his favorite.

His prayers were humble, yet eloquent, as he remembered those in need or those who were sick. He named them one by one and prayed as if he were conversing with an old and trusted friend.

He sang with a thunderous baritone voice as Cousin Gertrude labored at the piano. He particularly enjoyed "The Old Rugged Cross" and "When the Roll is Called up Yonder."

His log cabin was proof that he was a bonafied "do-it-yourselfer." He harvested the timber and painstakingly fitted each log together so tightly that even on the coldest day, his home was warm and cozy. Mr. Claude had lovingly handcrafted much of the furniture as presents for Mrs. Lou Ella. Everyone felt at home at Mr. Claude's and that old log cabin was bursting at the seams for family reunions and get-togethers. He was a grand storyteller and kept everyone entertained with fascinating stories as he sat in an old rocker positioned near the fireplace and spun tales of pioneers traveling West, Davey Crockett, or maybe the Alamo.

Mr. Claude was the proud owner of a gun collection. Polished, oiled, and in perfect working condition, they were carefully displayed on the walls and above the mantel in the living room. He was an avid trader, and the guns changed frequently; but he could relate, in intricate detail, the history of each piece to anyone who dropped by.

Reading was a passion for Mr. Claude. Without a doubt, this contributed to his abundance of tall tales. He liked westerns, history, war stories, and mysteries. Suffering from insomnia and not wishing to keep Mrs. Lou Ella awake, he sat by the hearth in his favorite rocker and read by the firelight until the wee hours of the morning.

A true Southern gentleman, always kind and caring, Mr. Claude found pleasure in simple things. Fame, wealth, and recognition meant little to Mr. Claude; but in his quiet, gentle, selfless manner, he earned a wealth of friends, lived a long and rewarding life, and touched the hearts of those who crossed his path.

Alice Brown

Words About Jim . . .

Many people limit their world, stop their horizons because they refuse to write. Some limit their writing to class assignments, business responsibilities, checks, and Christmas cards. Others seek and find new horizons, new worlds by writing, by controlling words, sentences, phrases, and sounds. Those who are willing to disturb their own universe and ours with their words are special people.

And it is to a very special person the **Microcosm** extends thanks and congratulations. Mr. Jim Bateman, the 1985 recipient of the Copiah-Lincoln Junior College Literary Hall of Fame, has been our friend and preceptor for several years. His care for words, and especially words in poetry, has allowed us to see first hand how the magic of the written word can enliven the life of the writer and enrich the horizons of the reader.

Jim Bateman lives with his wife Doris at Hazlehurst and is retired. "Doris and I are busier than ever," he says. He is a graduate of Copiah-Lincoln Junior College, Georgia State University, and Florida State University. His background also includes college teaching and administration. Jim and Doris, parents of two children, have two grandchildren. He writes from a background of rural upbringing in Mississippi, military service, education, various travels and types of employment, and multitudes of personal interests. His publications include **Cotton Candy and Turnip Greens**, with Henry Tim Chambers; **Worship With Words**; **Wanderings**, **A Book About Ruth**.

Microcosm Staff

Time Line

*Tomorrow hangs, a hazy dream;
yesterday lies dying;
today, a lightning laser beam:
flying, flying, flying.*

*Ahead, the unknown yet-to-be;
behind, the nearly-forgotten;
at hand: Tangible Now, begging
us to take an armful.*

So

*dreaming but to remember there's more
and recalling only what is worthy
we dig in today's vineyard,
drinking deeply.*

*As if today (a house not made by us),
asks us to be at home.*

Jim Bateman

Charm

1

*Miz Sarah said that all her tenants had
to bring her the empty cobs of the corn-
ears when we tenants shelled corn. Then she'd add,
"I'll get us good crops -- as sure as you're born."*

2

*What she meant was: she'd burn the cobs and drop
the ashes in the creek. "That will sweeten
the air for the plants to breathe -- all season long!"
(She'd give a wink above her corn-cob pipe.)*

3

*But Papa said,
 "She is doing that
 so she can count the cobs --
and thereby know
 whether we are stealing corn.
And she cooks breakfast with the cobs
 to save on buying her stove-wood."*

Jim Bateman

Spanish Lady

*You came to me from Spain,
a gift of love and beauty
with long black hair draped over your shoulder.*

*From the moment I gazed into your dark eyes
I was mesmerized by them.
I placed you far from harm, yet in open
display for friends to envy.*

*You are always complimented on your
dazzling green and gold gown and your
mantilla covered in matching green lace.*

*The pink rose blooming in your hair
heightens your dusky beauty.
And your castanets streamed with red and white
ribbons remind all of your heritage.*

*I often gaze at you in awe,
disbelieving your exquisiteness --
your radiating charm.*

*I wish I were you.
When you get knocked around, moved around
and hands grasp your gown,
you continue to smile -- never frowning.*

*I wish I were you.
You're happy on rainy days, dreary days
and in the dark.*

*I wish I were a
Spanish lady
high upon a shelf
engulfed in a plastic world.*

**Karen Wolfrum
First Place, Poetry
Honorable Mention, MJCCWA Competition**

To Fly

You'll see my get-away.

*I'll grow massive wings
 (with a 30 foot span)*

*and my feathers, colored black
 and looking thick,*

*will be enough to softly collide with
 any evening breeze --*

but not too much to let me go.

*No weight to carry anymore --
 just glide and steer*

*and up to the sky I go
with all my imagination will let me take with me.*

*You tiny little sparrows will eat
 your hearts out --*

*and you ground-destined prisoners
 won't waste your admiration on elegant peacocks
 (anymore).*

*Watch me soar --
 while you eat your sour grapes
and (for the first time)*

I will be what you wish for.

Me (and my flight)

*Someday --
 I think (maybe) I'll learn to fly.*

**Peggy Morrill
Second Place, Poetry
Honorable Mention, MJCCWA Competition**

Bedtime

*Boom, Boom, Boom my heart seems to shout.
The Boogie Man comes when the lights go out.*

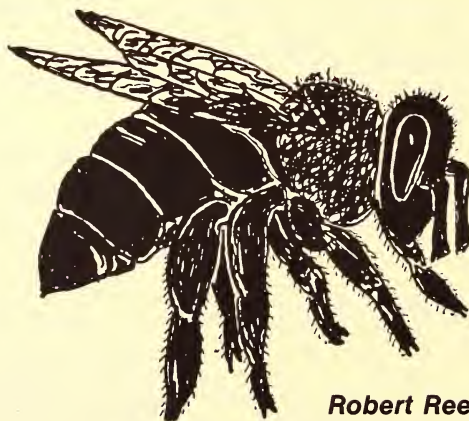
*He's in the closet or under the bed.
He has six eyes, three on each head.*

*He's going to get me and tear me apart,
nibble on my ears and gobble up my heart.*

*Break my back and bite off a toe,
swallow me down and then he'll go.*

*I know he's there, without a doubt.
The Boogie Man comes when the lights go out.*

**Chad Workman
Brookhaven High School
First Place, Poetry**



Robert Reese

“Slow Down”

Slow down, you're driving too fast.

Slow down.

I wish you would let me drive.

Slow down.

Please don't do that while you're driving.

Slow down.

We are too young for this.

SLOW DOWN!

Where am I? Where is Christy? Tell me!

She's Dead?

How could I have been so stupid?

Why didn't I slow down?

***Leanne Brown
Brookhaven High School
Second Place, Poetry***

From "A Potpourri of Emotions and Elements"

A R
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 E N RO I
 G P P
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Michelle Russell
Brookhaven High School
Third Place, Poetry

Unhappy Friend

*I was sitting with my legs crossed,
The paper spread out in front of me,
And that's where I saw it
On the page opposite the classified ads.
I read it many times,
Shocked.
I couldn't believe it was your mother;
She was just forty years old.*

*About three weeks later I saw you
At a basketball game;
You looked your usual cheerful
Self
I couldn't believe it.
I expected you to be down,
Unhappy,
Your face expressionless,
Eyes with dark circles.
I wanted to run over &
Hug you,
But when you looked my way,
I pretended to be watching the game.*

**Ann Sanders
Brookhaven High School
Third Place, Poetry**

Arise and Shine, My Child

*A stirring, drifting in and out of consciousness,
provokes me back from a restful night of sleep:
Sounds of a new and expectant glorious day,
melodious sounds, varieties of melody,
joyous sounds of different birds,
far-off cooing of sadness . . . different from
all other sounds . . .*

*The voice of the turtle-dove echoes throughout the land
reminding of a love relationship, a pleading sound
the groaning of all creation is waiting in expectation.
A delicate light pattern, intricate as spider's web,
splashes shimmering on my wall,
mysteries of the ages awaiting.*

*"Arise, my child, I have gifts of unspoken glories
awaiting you." Listening. Listening.*

*Breezes gentle as angels' wings stir in the willows
and brush my face with adoration.*

"Oh, Father, how I long for all to know You.

Such unspeakable gifts. They are not lost.

I hear, I sense your presence, your love for all who will.

*I mourn with the dove for those who won't hear,
who miss your love so freely given."*

*"Take my hand, child, we will walk together. We will
tell the world in splashes of color, in script, in
words and sounds too precious to be lost, a wooing of
the Spirit for all who will.*

Arise and shine for your light has come."

Barbara Black

Confession

*I have taken the
heart
that was lying
in your hands.*

*The one
you were probably
saving
for someone else.*

*Forgive me,
it looked
so lonely,
so lost,
and so friendless.*

Deserted Gallery

*Under the rafters
of the old, deserted barn
where there is nothing but rotting boards,
frilly
spider's webs
display the morning dew.*

Trace Your Roots

*A divided family is like a dandelion bloom.
When the wind blows, the members travel alone.
A true family is like the dandelion's roots.
Without them, the dandelion could not survive.*

Stacey Reid

Timeless Clouds

*Lying on a grassy hill,
Looking toward the sky,
What thoughts go through my head
As the clouds drift by?*

*Clouds are certainly majestic,
Gloriously filling the mind,
Shaping the imagination,
Surpassing dimension and time.*

*They're at their finest form at sunset,
Or when surrounding the moon;
But clouds are suprisingly amazing
During a sunny afternoon.*

**Mechell Cliburn
Brookhaven High School
Honorable Mention**

Is It More?

*Its leaves are like whistles making music
as the wind blows;*

*The limbs are like strong arms reaching up
to the heavens;*

*The trunk, so strong and firm, is like a ladder
striving to reach the utmost heights;*

*And the roots are grasping the earth for
immeasurable stability and strength.*

It gives so much —

It is really more than just

A tree?

**Ronda Haley
Brookhaven High School
Honorable Mention**

I Remember

I remember:

*Being in your arms
and how I felt
when I looked in your eyes
I would just melt.*

I remember:

*The happiness
that there used to be
when I was with you
and you were with me.*

I remember:

*Our first date
and our first kiss
which are some of the things
I truly do miss.*

I remember:

*I felt I wanted to
but I never did cry
on that night
which we said "good-bye."*

I remember:

*You made a promise
"I will always be there,"
You never did break it
so I know you really care.*

*I remember the past
and I know today
that deep down
our love will stay,
and even if we
are broken apart,
I have a special place
for you in my heart.*

**Peggy Puffer
Brookhaven High School
Honorable Mention**

The Homefront

Supper is finished. I stand at the kitchen sink, one foot propped on the knee of the other leg, "like a flamingo" my mom says. I splash the warm, sudsy water a little, both aimlessly and carelessly, and as usual cast my gaze past the pure white ruffled curtains and through the glazy kitchen window pane.

Out there is the world . . . or at least a large part of mine. In the nearest realm I see our spacious yard (we Southerners usually refer to it as yard rather than "lawn"), and on it is the now almost barren oak that shelters our brick home. Across the black-top road my eighty-four-year-old neighbor is watching television. I know this by now, for Miss Bea has a tendency to entertain the whole community with the volume of her television without even realizing it. She lives in a cozy gingerbread house nestled in tall, scattery Mississippi pines. A pea-patch length from there is the century-old, rusty-looking house sitting on the handful of land my grandfather invested in a few years back, promising my grandmother he would tear it down and use the wood to build an extra room onto their small house. The noble old house, still standing in spite of the promises, is large, but not vast, with columns on the porch made of, according to my Daddy, "they-don't-make-it-like-that-anymore" wood. The structure is composed of thick, dusty windows, a rickety old porch and steps, and a red tin roof that displays the sparkling snow and ice when it finally does get cold here. In spite of her age, the old house is still used as the precinct polling place. Whenever anyone mentions moving the location, Pap-Paw protests. "That old Ponderosa house is as good as any," he'll say with stubborn pride, and the voters continue to climb the creeky steps each election. The old house is familiar instead of foreboding. It just looms there with a fence of crepe myrtle trees bordering on its right side, with a magnolia tree, a plum tree and a pear tree, absent of their summer-sweet fruits, and two more graceful Mississippi pines rising up behind it.

If I stand on tip-toes and lean on the sink a little I can see my grandparents' house; painted a fairly nice shade of green, with white straight-backed chairs sitting on the front porch, sitting on the hill, surrounded by all of its various distractions. Pap-Paw's sweet potato patch runs up the right side of the house near the old smoke house. In the yard is the catapa worm tree, not a tree one would like to climb, but one producing prime sticky fish bait; the silver butane gas tank that we, as children pretended was a horse; and Mam-Maw's colorful flower beds arranged around tree stumps. Mam-Maw's thick red rose bushes invade the front porch, which is cumbering with green plants and old Dusty,

the brown family dog, about as lively as the green plants. Pap-Paw's old Ford pick-up truck, almost the same shade of green as the house, sits eagerly in the gravel driveway. The pink sky with blue remnants framing the home place quickly changes before my sixteen-year-old eyes as I scrub on a stubborn iron skillet.

I finish drying off the last plate. Daddy has settled into his favorite television chair. He sighs as he takes off his heavy work boots, smiles his jolly smile, and begins to stare, captivated, at the screen. I wipe the grease off the stove and hear the light sloshing sounds as Mom takes a bath, relaxing from her household chores. I slip through the living room wiping my wet hands on the side of my jeans, feeling the folded letter inside the pocket, and wander out onto the front porch. I find myself a place on the cement step and look out again, this time unhindered by glass, and the clean, cool air of a fall dusk begins to free my thoughts. The sky behind Mam-Maw and Pap-Paw's house is now deep orange-pink. The black silhouettes of the trees against the colored sky reminds me of the scene in **Gone with the Wind** where Scarlett and her father stand on a hill and look out over the Southern land.

This is home. "Sense of Place" is what Eudora Welty called it, and it is that. I look out with my eyes and my soul. I see miles of field, miles of forest; miles of hills that when Solomon wrote in the Proverbs, "I will lift mine eyes unto the hills, from whence comest my strength," he must have been looking at the ones in south Mississippi. The land is endless. Trees, vegetables, underbrush, and wildflowers bud in abundance. The grass is brown in the winter, but greener than green in the summer-time. From the porch I can see in the half light a graceful doe leap through the overgrown yard of the abandoned house next door. Two chattering squirrels scurry around the oak tree in front. Rippling streams, shimmering ponds, like Pap-Paw's pond out back, flowing tributaries of the Mississippi are everywhere. Not only houses abide, but homes. The sky is brighter here in this little section of the earth than any other place; the air fresher and more free than the finest oxygen, and there is enough close-knit love to go around.

I stretch with contentment as I look down the road. Around the curve is Aunt Helen and Uncle Bob's house. They've paid their price for living below the bend of that treacherous curve. Once a month without fail some dependable, slow-driving citizen rounds that curve a little miss-aimed and plunges down through the pine trees, landing in Helen and Bob's front yard, unharmed but baffled. "Helen," Bob will say in his slow, unruffled country voice, "Git up. Somebody's done run off in the yard agin." Aunt Helen and Uncle Bob are not really relatives, but everyone usually calls the older folk Aunt and Uncle. Aunt Helen was my four-to-five-year-old Sunday School teacher. "Jesus loves me this I know, for

the Bible tells me so . . . ,” we used to sing in our loud, off key voices. We would play with play-dough, learn Bible verses, and paste pictures of Baby Moses and Noah’s animals, birds of the air and fish of the sea, all over the sweaty blue cement walls, or either take them home for Mom to proudly put up on the refrigerator. And if we ever got out of hand, Aunt Helen would just say in her sweet, soft voice, “Now, my little children, ya’ll don’t do that.”

Aunt Helen’s twin sister Henrietta lived further down the road. She lived in a small gray house with three steps and a pipe-like rail leading up to the front porch, with pink rose bushes in the tiny patch of front yard. Aunt Henrietta died last year in the cold of December. We all miss her very much; Aunt Helen is especially desolate, being binded to her as twins will be. Now the house just stands bleak, empty, but the pink roses still bloom in the front yard.

Aunt Lydia lives down a meadow’s piece from there in a house trailer, uprooted by her children from her rotting and rambling home. In spite of her frailty she is strong-willed and cheerful. Aunt Lydia taught Mom how to make quilts; brilliantly crafted patterns of cloth, fitting together in perfect alignment. Aunt Lydia’s quilts manage to be traditional and modern all at once, while being warm at the same time.

If there was one word to describe my upbringing, it would be “nurture,” the sweetest, most careful method of growing up. These people, this place, cheer each victory, understand each shortcoming; they even understood when I outgrew the cotton dresses and brought my mastered English to the supper table.

But my imagination runs like a run-away child from these warm stars, to twinkling city lights and far-off galaxies. And sometimes there’s a part of me that wants to turn from here and go. So each day I keep stretching up for my place in society, even though I already have one.

I remember an old friend catching me last weekend at my part-time job, working the cash register, dusting, and stocking. “Well, Emily Landon,” he said and I turned from the film rack to find a tall, uniformed soldier in place of a fresh-faced country boy. I was thoroughly impressed with the worldly sophistication his southern accent had taken on. “Hey, Jimmy!” I had said from my bulky blue drug store smock as I laid down the dusty rag. He asked how the family and I were, and said that he really loved the navy. Imagine . . . I’d thought after he’d gone: just home from Japan and about to leave for Europe. And here I am in Smalltown U.S.A. I cleaned the glass door as I stared out at one of the town’s three vital stoplights, cautiously guiding to safety a dairy truck and two automobiles; and it’s rush hour. I rubbed the glass with determination and a little scorn in spite of my down-home good nature. Sometimes I get to feeling that way; like I have to run free and adven-

turous no matter what it is I do. And sometimes I really do hate the filthy old money, the grouchy customers, the dust and the drudgery of it all; and I'm determined that no one can keep me behind a small town drug store counter forever.

But that scorn isn't far-reaching; sometimes it just fades far away. Sometimes when I bicycle about visiting my neighbors, like Miss Bea, old but ageless in their goodness and satisfaction with life, I put all those hearty ambitions for me as a foreign correspondent, famed novelist, first lady, or concert pianist in the back of my mind. When I hike high in the hills, pick the wild buttercups and sweet narcissus in the spring, or walk through my grandfather's fields on a Sunday afternoon, I look out across golden corn rows, green pastures dotted with cattle, cascading hills and woods lit with sunshine, and I feel a different kind of freedom. A freedom is here for the taking that townhouses, glamorous parties, and dangerous assignments can not bring. More and more I see how these treasures have binded so many to the land for so long, and it doesn't seem so horrible a fate. Sometimes I just want to stay here, in this land that violence doesn't touch, where people say what they mean and mean what they say. Their language isn't money and trickery. At times like these I only hold on to those absorbing ambitions with a shallow grip; I am tempted to trade them in for daydreams of flower gardens, children playing in the yard, cooking supper, and sipping iced tea with a devoted husband at the end of a long summer day.

My mold is in two halves; my mind wandering to vast far-reaching facets, my eyes seeking foreign shores, but my heart staying home. I thrive on the elasticity, stretching between the two worlds. I just worry that one day I will be pulled so far that my bond with home will slip, and I'll be thrust completely in the other direction. I know that whatever I decide about my life, I will grow up to be no more than the woman that I want to be.

I pull the letter out of my jean pocket that I had received in the mail two weeks ago. I re-read the letter.

Miss Emily Farryl Landon:

We are pleased to notify you that your essay, "The Homefront," will be published in **The New Yorker**.

We invite you to meet with our editors on January the twenty-sixth and to attend the National Literary Magazine Awards Banquet in New York City on January the twenty-eighth as our guest.

Please notify us of whether or not you

will be attending. You will find additional information enclosed.

Sincerely,
William Fleischmann
Senior Editor, **The New Yorker**

I can hear the sewing machine roaring from Mom's bedroom window. She is at work making the gown that I will wear to the banquet.

I have decided to go. I will be going with Mom and Dad and taking everyone else's blessings. Who would have thought that the little essay I wrote from the heart while sitting under the shade tree would have taken me to a banquet in New York City. But it has, and I've decided to take a look at those twinkling city lights.

And I know that no matter what, I will always like biscuits as well as quiche lorraine, and I will always have the ability to discuss Aunt Helen's jelly recipe as avidly as the world's latest problems; and I'm proud of that too.

I smile a little smile, rise from the step and go back into the house as the moon rises in the shadows of the trees behind Mam-Maw and Pap-Paw's house.

Melissa Lewis
First Place, Short Story
First Place, MJCCWA Competition

Equinox

The cabin was dark, the only light coming from under the bathroom door. A stifling cold surrounded the bunks and their occupants. It seemed to prevent any type of movement. Sound, itself, was smothered in the vacuum-like cabin.

A young boy broke this magical spell as he stirred in his bed. He rose on one elbow and looked at the alarm clock next to his bed. Not yet prepared to face the chill, he pulled his covers around him and attempted to peer through the blanket of night that surrounded him.

Mustering his courage, the boy threw the covers off him and swung his legs off the side of the bed. As his feet touched the floor, he felt the icy contrast of the wood and instinctively jerked his legs back onto the bed. Abandoning this course of action, the boy pulled his legs underneath him and reached over to open his drawer.

From the top drawer he removed a pair of socks, underwear, jeans, and a shirt. He quickly changed, daring not to linger because of the intense cold. He found his hiking boots at the foot of his bed and pulled them on. After this action, he again swung his legs off the bed, but this time did not experience the frigidity of the floor. He reached to get his jacket from the bedpost and, at the same time, displaced his old fishing hat that was also there. He slid into the jacket and pulled the cap down on his head. Then he knelt on the floor and reached under his bunk for his tackle box.

As he slowly pulled, the top of the tackle box opened and caught on a bar underneath the bed. The force of this concussion caused the baits in the top tray to scatter across the floor. The boy was startled, but he became much more afraid. Had someone looked into his tackle box? He hoped that he had left the top open, but he knew this explanation was unlikely.

After he had gathered all his baits and placed them in their appropriate order in the trays, he closed the top and locked the box. He walked with the tackle box in one hand as he made his way through the bunks to the door which opened onto the porch. There, he stuffed his hands into old gloves and picked up his fishing rod.

When he reached the lake the sun was attempting to wrest itself from the Earth's grasp, causing the eastern sky to possess a supernatural glow. The lake was covered by fog that was gently rolled from one side to another by the cool breeze descending from the mountains. This breeze had no effect on the water which took on the quality of glass disrupted only by the occasional explosion of a fish bursting from its

liquid abode into the cold air.

The young boy walked along a trail that came from the cabins to the lake before it bordered the shoreline. He followed this path for some distance as it went along the lake's edge. When he reached a point camouflaged by bushes, the boy walked out and set his tackle box and rod on the ground. An open spot promised good fishing.

After the boy had rigged his rod, he cast toward the sun which was now beginning to escape Earth's hold. As the lure hit the water its glassy surface was broken by rings emanating from the point at which the lure had entered. The boy reeled slowly, glancing periodically at the trail. He continued in this manner for some time. After one cast he abruptly dropped the rod to the ground and walked over to the point which faced the path on which he had come; he then peered through the bushes looking for intruders. Next, the boy walked over to his tackle box and lifted the top tray. Under the tray was an old, blue, canvas bag. As he took the bag from its compartment, he again looked around.

When he was sure he was alone, he loosened the string that bound the end of the bag. He inserted his hand. It returned from the bag clutching an old, ragged teddy bear. He then stood and walked to the tip of the point that faced the sun.

As he sat down, he began to hug and kiss the old bear. Tears welled in his eyes, brought forth by his joy at being reunited with his friend. The young boy then began to tell the bear of the things he had been doing at camp. He laughed intermittently as he asked his old friend questions and imagined his answers. The young boy's eyes gleamed with happiness as he remembered the times at home when he and his bear had snuggled together to conquer the chill of rainy winter nights. The bear had been with him since he could remember. They had always been best friends.

The boy knew that he was getting older and that soon he would have to say goodbye to his faithful companion. For a moment this thought saddened him, but he decided to make the best of the time still allotted them.

As the sun freed itself from the Earth, its light and its warmth were spilled upon the lake. This event signaled a time to say goodbye.

As the boy walked back to the cabins, he passed two older campers, each carrying a fishing rod. Noticing the young boy's smile, one of the boys asked if he had been lucky. The young boy replied that he had been very lucky, and he continued, smiling, past the boys.

**Art Kergosien
Brookhaven High School
Scholarship Award**

The Clowns

Late one winter's evening, just after her sixteenth birthday, something drew Mary into Amy's room. Tucking the thick, down filled comforter a little closer around her daughter who was already fast asleep, Mary surveyed the room. Standing there in the half light and peaceful silence, her eyes rested on a poster on the wall. Tired eyes, probably the saddest eyes she had ever seen, were looking back at her.

In a whisper, as though someone were there she said, "I wonder why she wants to keep these clowns?"

Breaking away from the clown on the poster, her gaze went around the room. She saw plastic and porcelain harlequins in every conceivable size and shape. Why were they looking at her?

Sinking slowly to sit on her daughter's soft, comfortable bed, she began to think about Amy. Years were passing so fast now, where had they gone? Things she'd wanted to do for her, Mary is realizing will never become a reality.

Shaking her head, Mary felt the tears run down her face. Reaching for the corner of her pink shirt to dry her tears, she looked at the poster again. Something had changed, the sad eyes filled with compassion and held her with some strange magic. She couldn't break away. The clown's eyes moved, concentrating on her as though he understood the way she felt, and then he spoke.

"Lady," he said, "why do you torture yourself?"

Surely, she had imagined this soft, gentle voice, yet she heard herself answer.

"I'm not, I was just thinking about her and wishing things could be different for her. She deserves so much more."

He stepped down from the wall and walked towards the edge of the bed. His glittered suit, yellowed and musty, rustled as he moved. He smelled of greasepaint and moth balls. Reaching up to adjust the tiny felt hat that was balancing on top of his head, wiping the coarse, carrot colored, stringy hair from his face, he paused to regain his footing and he said.

"I'm gettin' too old to keep climb'n down off that wall."

Mary wanted to move, to leave, to be frightened, but she couldn't be any of these. A serene contentment filled the room.

"What do you mean, you're not real, are you?"

His gloves were frayed at the tips so that slender, delicate fingers protruded. When he lifted his hand to touch his round red nose, a music

box started to play. Sitting cautiously by her side he answered.

"I've been climb'n down from that wall the past four years."

"But why, I've never seen you before, except on that poster." Looking now towards the wall, Mary saw nothing. As if it had never existed, the poster was gone.

"We love her too, ya know," he went on.

"We?"

"All of us," he answered. "Look around you!"

Again Mary looked around the room at the clowns. They were everywhere.

"I've never understood why she wants to keep so many clowns, but they don't cost much and heaven knows I've never been able to give her anything important, so we buy clowns."

"The fellas and me, we watch out for her at night when you can't be around. We fill her dreams with wishes and then we blow'em up like balloons in the circus and watch'em float around the room. We kinda help her to know which ones she really wouldn't wantta keep. We don't burst those balloons though, we just open the window and let'em float away. She's been good to us too ya know. All of us, we were chosen special like, rescued from a shelf in the store and given a place of honor right here in this room. Clowns, like us, have only one life and that only comes when somebody loves us, and she does."

Now a tear was in his eye, so he drew his thoughts back to Mary.

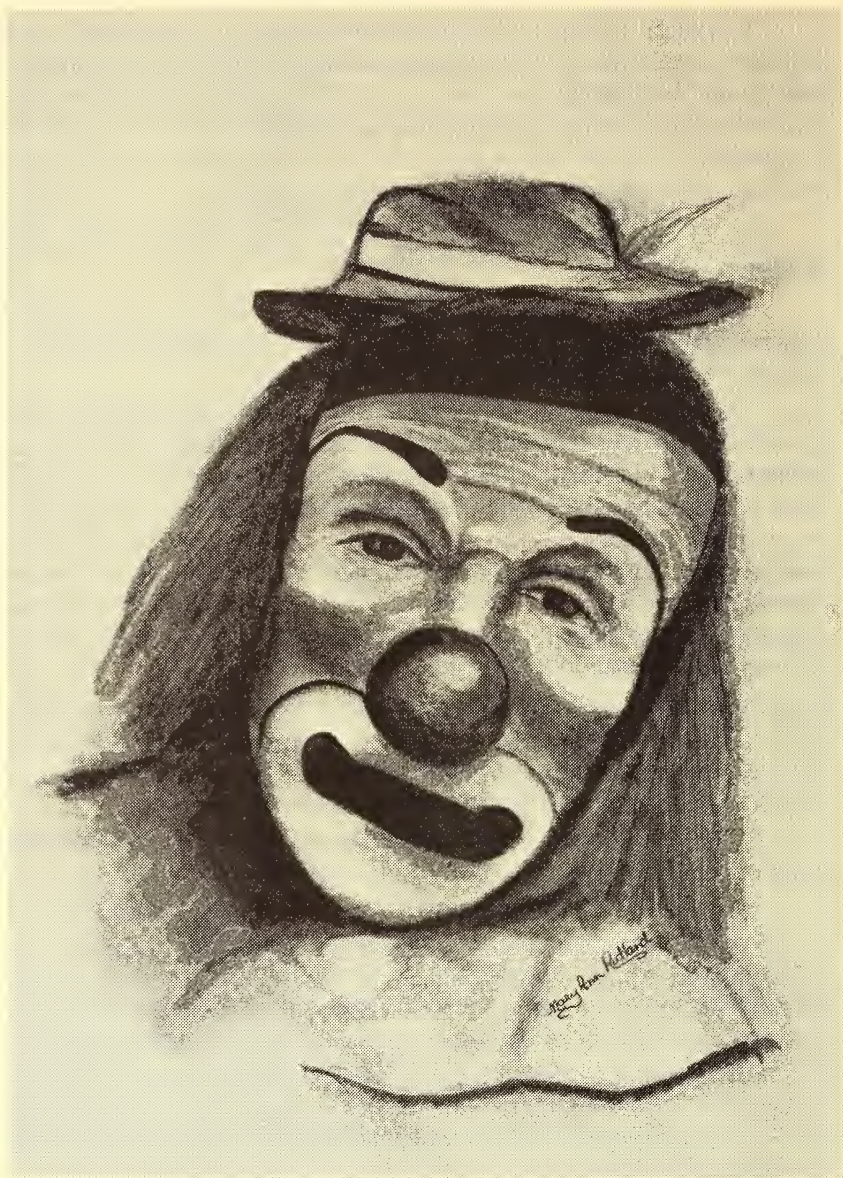
"I've watched you too," he went on, "coming in here every day to do something for her, and every night to be sure she's asleep and tell her one more time that you love her."

"I do love her, very much, but she's growing up and I don't have time"

He stopped Mary short and touching her hand, he said.

"Time, lady, wasn't meant to stand still, and love doesn't end with age, it grows. Things you can buy her are not what's important, but giving her the ability to love, and to share that love with others is important. You say you've never been able to give her anything important, but lady, where do you think she got that? The way I see it, the only thing left is to let her grow up, and let ya love grow with her. Remember, clowns only live when they're loved. Share with me my sadness and I'll share with you my joy."

He paused for an instant; taking a breath, he dropped his head to his chest. He seemed to be tired, maybe just resting a bit. Mary wanted to say something to him but she didn't know what to say. He lifted his head and went on.



Mary Ann Rutland

"I've lived a long time, seen people come and go, but it's been a long time, lady, since I've seen anybody torture themselves like you do. Tonight when you came in here, you thought to yourself that I had the saddest eyes you'd ever seen. Can't you recognize these eyes, or do you see through a dirty mirror? Sad eyes can change, look at yours."

She stood and moved toward the mirror. There in the dim reflection she saw the sad eyes of the poster looking back: her eyes. Dropping her head she whispered,

"No, it can't be!"

The music box stopped playing and as Mary looked up again the eyes had changed. Now she saw understanding in them; she saw peace.

Smiling, Mary whirled around to thank him, but he was gone. She glanced frantically around the room, he was nowhere in sight. Quickly she looked toward the wall. The poster was just as it had been when she came in, except for one thing. The sad eyes were happy. Mary walked across the room and ran her finger across the words written at the bottom.

'Share with me my sadness and I'll share with you my joy.'

She read the words aloud and added, "Thank you."

Half asleep, her daughter looked up from her bed.

"Did you say something to me, Mama?"

"I just wanted to tell you one more time that I love you."

"I know. I love you too."

Mary Ann Rutland
Second Place, Short Story

Jackie's Hurt

The little girl had to do the most difficult, even absurd, thing in her life. And she didn't even understand it. Snow was falling at irregular intervals as if it could not decide to snow or not. Yet the sky looked as though another snow storm was on the way in. She would like to stay indoors safely away from the cold and the snow. But today she could not: she had somewhere to go.

Jackie went into the cold dreary room. She had always been a little afraid of that room. It was her grandfather's, but her grandfather was not there now. She ran into the room where her mother was, and she saw her mother crying.

"Mother, where is Grandfather? And why are you crying?"

Mrs. Marks wiped her eyes with a blue tissue. "Your grandfather has left."

Jackie quickly asked, "When is he coming back and why did he go?"

"Well, he went to a better place where there will be no pain for him. Jackie, you know he has been sick for a long time. He is not coming back, Honey."

"Why did he leave? I helped you give him his medicine. And I didn't make noise when I played. I don't understand. You tell him to come back. Tell him to come back, NOW!" Jackie's voice grew louder.

"Now, Jackie, I can't do that. He was not happy here. He was tired, and he hurt so badly. You remember one day he talked to you, and he told you he had a special place set aside in Heaven for him. That was his way of telling you that he would be going there one day."

"Heaven? He's gone to Heaven?"

"Yes, Jackie, he has." Mrs. Marks smiled and held Jackie close.

"But, Mama, I didn't think he meant he would be going so soon. My Sunday School teacher is always talking about Heaven and God, but I thought that was a long way off like Christmas or summer or just Sunday School talk."

"No, Jackie, for your grandfather it wasn't like Christmas or summer or just Sunday School talk. For him—as sick as he was—it was soon and he knew. Sometimes, I think, he pretended not to know, but he was ready. And he wanted us to be ready and happy for him. It is hard for us, for your daddy and your grandmother especially—and for you. But he was actually looking forward to being with God and being free of pain."

Jackie was listening, but she didn't understand. She didn't under-

stand at all. Maybe Mama was right; maybe he was better off. But he could have told her that he was going. She went to her room after her mother gave her an extra tight hug. She began to remember some of the good times she and her grandfather had had together.

The best time she believed they had ever had was the day he had taken her to ride horses. They had left early that morning and stayed gone the whole day. Jackie smiled as she thought about falling off the horse. Her grandfather had picked her up, and he had carefully brushed the leaves from her jeans. "Get back up there, kid, and try again. The Marks are not quitters. I'll be here to catch you or pick you up again, if you fall."

Jackie came back to reality when her blue-eyed mother came into her bedroom. "Jackie, I am dressed, and now we must get you ready."

"Ready, Mother? Where are we going?"

"The funeral. Jackie, you know we have to go to the funeral. Daddy and I told you about that yesterday. Grandmother will need you to help her through this. Daddy needs you too."

Jackie began crying and shaking her dark head. "I don't want to go. I don't want to go."

"Come on, Dear, you have to go. Grandfather would want it that way."

"Would he? Are you sure?"

"Yes, I'm sure. Didn't you tell me that he told you the Marks are not quitters?"

"Yes, he told me that when I fell off the horse. I guess I would be a sort of a quitter if I didn't go with you and Daddy and Grandmother."

Mrs. Marks smiled as she dressed Jackie in a beautiful little blue wool dress. She combed her hair and placed blue ribbons on either side of the part.

Jackie and her mother arrived at Brownwell's Funeral Home about an hour before the services. The preacher, people from the church, and neighbors were already gathering on the steps and the porch of the red-brick funeral home. Jackie saw the people talking, smiling, crying, laughing. Some of them came over to her and hugged her and patted her on her head. The pins in the ribbons began to hurt her head.

She saw the flowers, more flowers than she had ever seen before, more than there were at her cousin's wedding. Jackie pulled on her mother's skirt. "Mama, why are there so many flowers here? Is Grandfather getting married? And why did those people bring food to our house? Do we not have any money to buy food now that Grandfather is gone?"

"No, Dear, that is just what people do when someone dies," Jackie's

mother reassured her.

"Dies? I don't understand." Jackie's mouth began to turn down like her dad's did when he was upset about the lawn mower.

"Jackie, you remember we talked about Heaven and God? You know Grandfather has gone to be with God."

"I know that. But you never said **dies**. I don't like that word."

She broke away from her mother and ran to the far end of the carpeted funeral parlor. She came to a long cold-looking gray box. Standing on her tiptoes, she could see her grandfather dressed in a dark brown suit and a striped tie. She reached up and over to touch his hands. They were as cold as ice, as cold as the snow she had seen that morning falling outside her house. She began yelling and screaming. "Grandfather, wake up. Wake up! Grandfather, I don't understand."

Aunt Sue came over to her and took her hand. "Jackie, come on. Let's go for a ride. We need to get some air and to talk. I'll get us some ice cream." Aunt Sue knew Jackie loved ice cream.

Jackie did love ice cream, but not today. Aunt Sue understood that ice cream would not make her hurt better. She held Jackie close as they drove around town before the funeral. Snow was falling in steady flakes, and gradually the brown grass and the sidewalks were disappearing.

Her grandfather had been dead for a long while before she understood, and then not completely. Jackie still wishes her grandfather could come back to share the good times with her. Death—Jackie will never quite understand, but now she knows it has to happen. Sometimes at night Jackie thinks of her grandfather and cries a silent dry tear.

Every time when a snow storm is in the making, Jackie feels relief as she thinks of her grandfather who is in Heaven. And when the soft snow falls and covers the uneven ground outside, Jackie has a special peace inside.

Cindy Crews
Copiah Academy
Second Place, Short Story

Fading Friendship

I was certainly surprised when I saw her in the lobby of the theatre as I arrived for the charity ballet. I was not sure this was the same Alexis McAllister I had known in high school and I was to find out later, she was by no means the warm, caring girl who had been my best friend.

Our eyes locked at the same moment and slowly, almost reluctantly, she began to weave her way through the crowd until she was standing directly in front of me. As she spoke my name, I noticed the distant, remote tone of her voice. As we exchanged greetings and the usual questions of reunited friends, I began to notice her appearance and dress.

She still had that oblong face with a certain beauty all its own, but I seemed to remember a radiance from the old days that was no longer visible. Her eyes were still outstanding, although the crystal blue coloring had paled and seemed cold and watery. She still had that slim figure emphasized by simple but elegant attire.

In response to my question about how she kept herself busy these days, her eyes immediately became downcast as she simply replied, "Oh, this and that." I talked about my career as a pharmacist and my marriage to the head of surgery at Mt. Sianai Hospital. I told her about my two young sons and asked if she had married and if she had a family. I tried to find out without asking why I had not seen her face on the covers of the arts magazines in recent years.

She explained that she had never really had any desire to marry, although she had had many companions over the years. She went on to say that her career as a ballet dancer had come to an end. Her body had aged and her muscles had hardened so she could no longer perform.

Something tightened inside me. Was it sorrow for the pain that she must have gone through to face reality or was it still that hint of jealousy that had plagued me during my high school years? Oh, we were inseparable. We had no secrets but shared our thoughts and feelings. I can still remember walking down the hallways of the old school in silent envy as I watched the looks every boy gave Alexis. Even then she was talented in every way. She was bright, loving; beautiful, and already developing into an outstanding ballerina. She was the pride of all her instructors and occasionally under the facade of excitement over my friend's success, I would think to myself, "Why not me?" I just could not hold a candle to Alexis!

I came back to reality just in time to hear Alexis say that her grand-

mother had just died. Mamma McAllister had taken Alexis into her home upon the tragic deaths of Alexis's parents. On the nights of our pallet parties, Mamma Mac would sit up into the early morning hours listening to the latest gossip and telling us stories of her childhood. She had a great love for the ballet and encouraged Alexis toward her career as a ballerina. Mamma Mac was friend and mentor to Alexis as she achieved world renown. I remembered the love and admiration Alexis had for her grandmother and later realized how our chance meeting must have caused her to recall so painfully the void left by Mamma Mac's death.

I was just about to say how truly sorry I was to hear of her loss when the lights flickered to signal curtain time. Alexis had just begun to open up to me, and she seemed anxious as we were caught up in the ocean of people being swept toward the theatre doors. I asked if she had seen this ballet performed before and she said she had not. She stopped at the door, wiped her eyes, and said she had decided not to stay.

I really do not know why I did not offer to go some place with her for a while so we could talk. Maybe it was because our parting years ago was less than pleasant. We had compromised in choosing a college which was close enough to home for her to continue her ballet lessons that would meet our other educational needs fairly well. We were going to be roommates until she got a scholarship to another school in the next state. Looking back on it now, I can understand why she chose that college. It had a fine arts department and the scholarship was more than generous. But at the time I was furious to be left at that school alone with nothing but an occasional card at Christmas time.

As I sat through that somewhat mediocre ballet performance, I thought about all the good times we had together and began to feel guilty. I decided to give her a call the following morning, but I received no answer at the number she had scrawled on the scrap of paper in the lobby of the theatre. I went to the hotel where she was staying and found that she had checked out.

Perhaps the memories of our experiences both happy and sad were too painful. Our friendship had faded for the second time. Could it ever be restored?

Lee Carney
Copiah Academy
Third Place, Short Story

Teakie, The Dream Box

From the onset the day was fairly normal, until the arrival of my Aunt Brenda's strange and exotic gift of a teakwood box from Hong Kong. Although I could never figure out the mystery surrounding the box, a rare type of teakwood, I was soon to discover the enchantment of my little wooden container.

My mother woke me up early that morning with the news that the postmaster had phoned and asked if someone could come to the post office and pick up a package for "Miss Beverly Clark." The package was encased in a box the size of a shoe box. I signed for the package and took it home. I walked into the warmth of the den and plopped unceremoniously down onto the thickpile carpet. I began to tear into the box and had to get Daddy's pocket knife to cut through the thick, protective layers of tape. Inside the cardboard box was a chaotic mass of shredded oriental newspaper. After removing three handfuls of the paper, I finally reached the good stuff. Nestled among the confines of thousands of incomprehensible words was another tiny little box made of Teakwood.

I recalled the long distance conversation I had had with Aunt Brenda just one month earlier. She had asked if there was anything special that I wanted for my eighteenth birthday. I told her to surprise me. Surprise me she did! I lifted the lid of the box, detailed with delicate leaves and flowers no larger than lady bugs, and saw the lush blue velvet lining of the interior.

On first seeing the little white card inside the box, I naturally assumed that it contained suggestions as to what to do with the box. I thought, "It probably just says, 'Made in Hong Kong. May be used as jewelry box, letter box, or junk box.' " But the card told the history of the box and how to use it. The owner is supposed to store things in it but not jewelry and love letters. I was to store thoughts and dreams, hopes and wishes inside. Only the box and I would know what would be safely hidden away.

Strange as it may seem, this box possessed its own specific character and personality: I had to give it a name. I pondered with names for some few minutes and finally decided to call it Teakie, derived from "Teakwood."

I took Teakie to my room and after making sure I had read the instructions well, I lifted the lid. I was frightened by the colossal pace in which I was receiving mental messages of all my hopes, dreams, and

wishes. They were coming on fast; they would not, or could not, stop. My dreams of finishing college and working; my wishes of having my own family; my hopes of complete happiness all poured into that tiny box. I did not know how to cease my thought flow. I felt as though I were driving at breakneck speed. I quickly shut the lid of the box and sat it on the floor in front of me.

I lay down, curled up around Teakie, and fell asleep. I was totally exhausted. I awoke with a feeling of complete rest although I had slept for only thirty minutes. I remembered exactly what had happened. I had the same frightened feeling that I had previously encountered. I picked up the card and read through it again:

"This box causes an increased thought flow
which may lead to a sense of dizziness."

Without realizing I had done anything at all, I had filled the box with everything imaginable. If the lid were reopened, my ideas would float around the room so that I could see them and categorize them into groups of importance.

I closed the door and locked it. I sat down on the bed and scooted to the middle, propping against the headboard. I opened the lid with great anticipation, not knowing what to expect. Swirling about me was a thick fog of pictures, each with its own individual dream. My thoughts had woven together with my hopes to form a long line. They flashed before my face with the visual impact of a 3-D movie. As quickly as they started, they stopped and floated back into the box, closing the box lid behind them. I could not understand what had happened, what I had just experienced. I lay Teakie gently on the floor beneath my bed.

Every day I thought into the box. Just as someone uses his voice to speak through the phone, I used my thoughts to convey all of my secrets. This routine activity played such a major part in my daily life that I became very upset when, one day, I discovered Teakie was missing from his usual place. I felt as though someone had taken away my soul; all the colors of my rainbow had turned black and white. I could not accept the idea that someone had taken Teakie from me. I started thinking that it could be possible for the box to disappear on its own power. After all, it did close its own lid. I thought, "What if I stored too much in it, too many thoughts? I wonder if it destroyed itself?" I was worried that someone would open it and let all my secrets escape. I could not imagine what would happen if something had gone wrong with Teakie. I agonized over Teakie's fate. Hours after Teakie's disappearance, I finally went into my room to study. I looked in the mirror and caught the reflection of a box lying on my bed. I turned and picked it up. Suddenly, all the color flooded back into my life. I quickly shut and locked the door. I opened Teakie's lid, but for some unexplainable reason,

there was no lightning filling the emptiness of my room. Where had my three months of dreams gone? There were no 3-D images, no fog, no dizziness. I saw only the blue velvet interior and an additional card. It read:

“Dreams, like people, grow old.
When the time comes, we must let them
die to make a place for new ones.
Let those old dreams die.
Dream on.”

Beverly Clark



Dorris Nolan

Life After Death: A Journal

February 28, 2050

I am alone now. Everybody is dead. The last died yesterday. I seem to be immune to whatever it was that took everyone else. It is eerie being alone. There is no sound of people talking or of children playing. I can't hear anyone working or see anybody just being lazy. If I go up on the hill I can see miles and miles of barren streets and to the north I can see the graves of the dead. I buried most of them and painted stones for markers.

I wonder if anybody out in the country survived. I doubt it. Isolation didn't seem to help.

Most of the animals survived except for the dogs. The disease drove them mad, and they wouldn't have anything to do with humans. They seemed to forget how to hunt, and so they starved to death.

March 5, 2050

Getting food is no problem. Dehydrated foods will probably be good for years to come. I learned how to make bread, but I'm worried about what will happen if the flour is spoiled. I guess I will have to learn how to farm.

I have some horses so that I can ride wherever I want to go. I decided to save nitrogen for long trips. I might travel one day to find out if anyone else survived.

I scavenged most of the houses. My house is now full of the necessities, and I gathered logs for the fireplace. This house has one of the few old fireplaces left in town. I never liked the smokeless fireplaces.

I found a computer today. I'm going to try to contact other survivors.

March 10, 2050

The computer works but I only get unmanned terminals. The computers were programmed to count the dead and the tally is horrible. I don't think anyone else survived. New York City's population of twenty million was wiped out. It is the same everywhere else as well.

I managed to round up a herd of dairy cattle. As I have moved all of my livestock to the nearest farm, I've got a place to milk them. Storage of the milk is a problem though. I'm running out of cans. I slaughtered a couple of cows and hung them in the deep freeze.

I found some weapons so that I can hunt and protect myself if need

be. Rabbit is plentiful and so is turkey. I have a chicken coop as well so I won't starve for meat. I will plant my crops soon.

March 20, 2050

Eureka! I found someone! Two men and a woman! After I told them of my situation they decided to come here! I have to find places for them to stay now. The farmhouse is a good idea. It has ten bedrooms, four baths, and real fireplaces.

I found a wine cellar with some really good years in it. I think I'll break out a couple for the occasion. There are several beer barrels as well. We will have a grand party.

March 22, 2050

They have arrived! They say they are the only survivors of Los Angeles. There are four of us now and soon to be five. Sara is pregnant. She and I are setting up a nursery. Ben and Adric have taken over the dairy and slaughterhouse from me. Thank goodness! Killing was never my cup of tea. Such a quaint expression! Cup of tea! I love it!

Oh well, that is off the track. Sara and Ben are married and the baby is their first child. Adric is very good looking.

April 10, 2050

It's a girl! Sara is going to call her Nixie, short for Phoenix. I think that is appropriate. She is darling! She weighed seven pounds, seven ounces, and has dark brown hair. Her eyes will probably be green. She makes me wish I was a mother.

We have discovered four more survivors! They are in Oregon, but they aren't going to come yet. They want to gather some things and find a few trucks to haul some important belongings. Also, they want to check a place where there might be more survivors. Oh, I hope so!

May 30, 2050

I haven't written in a long time. So many things have happened. The four from Oregon arrived with six others from Washington state. We've opened a few more houses and brought in some more livestock. We needed more horses and we brought in some beef cattle

One man from Oregon is a doctor, and there is a computer technician and a dairy man from Washington. Strange how we get just what we need. The doctor gave everyone a physical. We are all healthy and Nixie is fine.

Adric and me! It's great!

June 4, 2050

I am twenty-three today. My grandmother would have been eighty-

three. I am a Hitchner like she was because my father was a distant cousin of hers.

The comptech has managed to connect with oversea terminals. Everybody is dead over there as well. Russian China, England, France, Africa, and South America. All dead. It's horrible. I hope there are other communities like ours.

I don't think we are going to find any more survivors. It's strange to think that most of the survivors came from the West Coast. I was the only one who didn't. I guess this Rocky Mountain air has kept me healthy.

June 23, 2050

I'm pregnant! Adric is the father. Oh, I hope it's a boy! We are getting along just fine. Nixie has a cold. These people aren't used to this fresh mountain air. Colorado has the freshest air in the world.

The comptech says that if there are any other survivors, then they aren't near a terminal. Oh well.

June 25, 2050

Everyone is ill except me. Doc says it's just colds, but I say it's plague. He says it is impossible because they survived the first time so therefore they must be immune. I say that doesn't mean anything. The disease might have skipped over them for some reason or it might be more virulent here and is now taking its toll. Oh God.

June 26, 2050

Doc died first. Before he died he said that I must be a carrier and that I might never become sick with the disease. I'm losing the baby. I started having contractions right after Doc left us. Oh God, why me?

June 28, 2050

I am alone now.

**Mary Hitchner
Brookhaven High School
Honorable Mention, Short Story**

A Taste for a Better Life

CHARACTERS

LUANNE FRANKLIN, wife of country store owner

FRANK FRANKLIN, JR., owner of Franklin's General Store

DONWARD DILLMAN, city businessman

The action takes place in the Franklin's kitchen, in front of their store, and in a business office. It is 1920.

SCENE I, (*LuAnne is busily preparing dinner. While she is bustling around from the stove to the table, we hear the ring of an old cash register. She does not seem to notice this sound; it is very common to her. It comes from the store on the front of their small house. The store had been the project of her husband's father. He had dreamed of building a store in this small community when he was young to provide people with goods needed so they would not have to travel to the nearest small store twenty miles away.*

LuAnne had met her husband, Frank Franklin, Jr., here while visiting her Uncle Vernon, who had lived a few miles from the store until his death. She and Frank had become very close. As fate would have it they fell in love and were married. Frank's parents had died leaving him to run the store, so Frank and LuAnne now live in the rear of the store. LuAnne has become bored with the life that they are living. The country has become more industrialized and people are moving to the cities to work in factories in hope of a better life.)

LUANNE, (*brightly*) How was your day, Frank?

FRANKLIN, 'Bout the usual. There was one carload of city folks who stopped for some snacks. Sold'em three dollars worth!

LUANNE, Well that was a blessing for sure. I have been putting up preserves today. Got nearly eleven jars. (*serving Frank some stew.*) I heard that the Johnson's were leaving for the city pretty soon.

FRANKLIN, (*suddenly furious*) Damn them! How's a man supposed to make a livin' when all his neighbors are pullin' up their roots an' takin' off for Lord knows where!

LUANNE, (*soothingly*) Now, now, Frank, we'll make it all right; we always have.

FRANK, (*disgustedly*) I s'pose so.

LUANNE, Mrs. Johnson said that there are a good many jobs for strong men in the city and that . . .

FRANK, (*shouting angrily*), I don't care what that ol biddy Johnson says! What does she know 'bout the city? She's lived here all her life

and her folks before her an . . .

LUANNE, And your folks before you, I know, I know, Frank, just listen to me! Mrs. Johnson's sister lives in Brandingston and they write letters to each other. She said that jobs are plentiful and money is the best they have ever seen.

FRANKLIN, (*upset by the mention of money*) Money, money, money is that all you think about? Maybe you shoulda married some rich man from the city, you seem so gosh awful excited about it now.

LUANNE, (*sternly*) You know better than that, Frank. If I didn't love you I wouldn't have married you. I know that we would live here and run the store, but that don't mean that we have to do this forever! We're still young and have many things to look forward to. You can't let this store keep us from having a better life!

FRANKLIN, A better life. Money, money, money is that all you think about LuAnne? This store was my father's dream. He built it from nothing to what it is!

LUANNE, (*voice rising as she takes a firm stand in the argument*) No, Frank, he built it up to what it **was**. Can't you see? People are moving away every week. You have fewer and fewer customers. How are we going to live here when we are the only ones left? People are tired of the land around here that has tied them down for so long. It was good during their folk's time, but it's used up from all the planting year after year after year. And with the unpredictable weather like tornadoes and droughts people can see that it's just not worth it to put their entire life into something that may be destroyed before they wake up in the morning.

FRANKLIN, (*calming down*) You're full of 'ol wives tales, LuAnne. People here were made to live from the land and work for themselves—it's the only righteous way!

LUANNE, Righteous way? What do you know about a righteous way? You haven't hardly been to church in two years. You're afraid somebody will come by the store for something while you are gone.

FRANKLIN, People don't have to go to church to be righteous.

LUANNE, And they don't have to live in a used-to-be store and used-up land either.

FRANKLIN, (*trying to use reason*) How would we move to Brandingston anyway? We don't have that much money. How would we carry our things? Where would we live if I decided to go an' look for one of them good payin' factory jobs?

LUANNE, (*caught off guard*), I don't know, maybe we . . .

FRANKLIN, Yeah maybe—if you ask me there's a mite too many maybe's. About all of that, LuAnne, why don't you just eat supper and

forget all them foolish notions.

CURTAIN

SCENE II, (*Later one evening, Frank and LuAnne are sitting at the table reading. Suddenly there is a knock upon the door.*)

LUANNE, It sounds like somebody at the door, Frank.

FRANKLIN, (*rising from his chair to open the door*), Wonder who it could be at this time of night. (*Frank opens door*).

DILLMAN, (*standing outside of the doorway smartly dressed*), Excuse me, Sir, I was hoping that I could get some gas for my automobile. I seem to have gotten out here without enough to make it back to Brandingston. I'll be glad to pay you for your trouble.

FRANKLIN, (*allowing Dillman to enter*) Sure, sure, man, no trouble. Won't you come in for a cup of coffee?

DILLMAN, That would be very fine, sir, thank you. I am Donward Dillman. I have been riding around looking over the area around here today. It is a very pretty countryside here.

FRANKLIN, (*excited and beaming with pride*) Yes, sir, the best anywhere. My folks and their folks lived here most of their lives, (*LuAnne cuts Franklin a hopeless look, but he is unaware*) LuAnne, would you get Mr. Dillman a cup of our coffee while I tend to his car? Have a seat, Mr. Dillman. (*Frank exits*)

LUANNE, Here you go, Mr. Dillman (*returning from stove with cup of coffee*).

DILLMAN, (*taking the cup from LuAnne*), Thank you Mrs. . . .

LUANNE, Franklin, LuAnne Franklin, but you can call me LuAnne.

DILLMAN, (*finishing a sip of coffee*) Oh, well, thank you, Mrs. LuAnne.

LUANNE, (*inquisitively*) Why have you been looking around here, Mr. Dillman?

DILLMAN, (*seemingly caught off guard*) Oh, I . . . well I'm looking for a place. Yes, a place. For a . . . a . . . a . . . house.

LUANNE, (*confused*) A house?

DILLMAN, (*regaining his composure*) Yes, a house . . . a country home. It sometimes gets awfully stuffy and tiring in the city. I thought that I might find a place to get away from all of that noise.

LUANNE, (*understandingly*) Yes, I guess that's so. It ain't good for anybody to stay in the same place all the time. I've been wanting to move to the city for a long time, but Frank is afraid his family tree will die if he pulls his roots out of this store.

DILLMAN, I see. Things are going very well for most everyone in Brandingston right now with all of the factory jobs. How does Mr. Franklin

talk you into staying here. I know the wants of a strong-willed woman are hard to talk down.

LUANNE, Well, I do love him, and he does make sense because moving our things to the city would cost a pretty penny, and if we did get that far, what would we do until he found a job? It could take weeks, not just a day. And Frank's not one to take a chance on something like that while he's got this God-forbidden store. Oh . . . I'm sorry, Mr. Dillman. I didn't mean to pour my troubles out to you; you're a visitor.

DILLMAN, (*interested*) Yes, but I did ask, Mrs. LuAnne. I know several men who have made it big just because they were willing to take a chance though. But do you think that Mr. Franklin would move to Brandingston if he had a job waiting and did not have to worry about moving?

LUANNE, (*alarmed*) No, no, Frank would never leave his things here. Or me either. We would want to take . . .

DILLMAN, (*amused*) No, no, I mean if he did not have to worry about paying to have them moved.

LUANNE, (*sadly*) I don't know. He would probably just make up another excuse, but it don't matter. It don't seem that we will ever have that much money so it's better that I forget the whole thing. Can I get you some more coffee, Mr. Dillman?

DILLMAN, No, thank you, this is quite enough. It is also very good.

LUANNE, Yes, Frank insists on buying the darkest coffee beans from the merchant truck that delivers the things here to the store. He grinds them himself. (*Frank enters*).

FRANKLIN, I have you all fired up, Mr. Dillman. You're full of gas, oil, and I washed your windshield.

DILLMAN, (*rising from chair*) Thank you very much, sir. How much do I owe you?

FRANKLIN, (*wiping his hands on an old red rag*) It'll be five dollars and twenty five cents.

DILLMAN, (*taking his wallet from inside his coat*) Fine. Here's a ten for the trouble I put you to.

FRANKLIN, (*waving the money back toward Dillman*) That's all right. you don't have to give me that I . . .

DILLMAN, (*interrupts and hands the money to Franklin*) I insist, Sir. Please take it. Your wife tells me that you may be moving to Brandingston in the future. (*Franklin cuts a look at LuAnne. She appears innocent*).

FRANKLIN, I doubt it. We have too much here. Well, it ain't that much, but it's all we got, and there ain't much of it could be turned into cash. It would take a good bit to move all the way to Brandingston. (*Franklin sits down and Dillman returns to his seat*).

DILLMAN, Yes, your wife and I were talking about that. Maybe I can help you.

LUANNE, (*greatly interested*) Really, do you know someone in Brandingston that could get Frank a job?

DILLMAN, Yes, I do. But more than that I think you can get the money to move your things also.

LUANNE, How's that?

DILLMAN, Well, like I said I have been looking around out here today for a place to put . . . I mean a country home. If you were willing to sell your place here, I think it would be perfect for my country cottage.

LUANNE, (*rising from chair*) Oohh! This is a miracle, a true miracle. The nights I've prayed for something like this to happen. For the Lord to find us a way so that we could move to the city and have a family and live good and . . . (*realizing Frank's silence*) What's wrong, Frank?

FRANKLIN, (*looking down at the floor, speaks silently*) I can't sell this place.

LUANNE, (*confused*) What?!!

FRANKLIN, (*rising to address LuAnne*) This is my father's store; his life dream; I promised him that I would stay here and keep his dream goin'.

LUANNE, (*pleading*) Frank, we can't stay here: there's nothing for us here. Your father didn't know that things were going to change like this. He wouldn't want us to stay here when everyone else was gone. (*Dillman sits silently observing their argument*).

FRANKLIN, How do you know what he wanted? He was my father and I know what he went through to make this place!

LUANNE, Would you stop living in the past, Frank? The world has changed and we are going to have to change too if we are ever going to have our little part of the world to enjoy. (*Frank stomps out of the room*).

DILLMAN, I am truly sorry, (*Dillman rises and prepares to leave*). I did not mean to cause such great trouble. Maybe it would be best if I would go.

LUANNE, (*following Dillman to the door*). It's not your fault, Mr. Dillman. It's just that Frank can sometimes be a stubborn fool about things like this place. Could you come back in a month or so? I'm sure that I can reason with Frank by then.

DILLMAN, (*standing inside; hand on door knob*) I believe that I can return in about five weeks if you are sure that it is all right.

LUANNE, I'm positive.

DILLMAN, Very well, I shall see you then, Mrs. LuAnne. (*Dillman opens the door and exits*). Here's my address in case you need to see

me sooner.

LUANNE, Goodnight, Mr. Dillman.

(CURTAIN)

SCENE III, (*The day Dillman returns—Frank is outside cleaning up around the store.*)

DILLMAN, (*approaching Franklin*) Good morning, Sir!

FRANKLIN, (*facing Dillman and offering handshake*) Good mornin', Mr. Dillman. I guess you got my letter.

DILLMAN, Yes, I was glad to hear from you. I think that this will work out for the best for all of us.

FRANKLIN, Yeah, well I hope so. There's one other thing, Mr. Dillman.

DILLMAN, Yes?

FRANKLIN, Would you leave this sign here? It's been here since my father built the store, kind of a sentimental thing I guess. He was always so proud of the honest, hard work he did here. He was a God-fearing man and he was proud to have the family name there. (*pats sign*) (*Sign reads: Franklin's General Store*)

DILLMAN, I don't think that will be a problem.

FRANKLIN, Thank you.

DILLMAN, I am truly sorry about the commotion I caused last week, sir. If I had known that you were so strongly attached to your home and store here, I would have never suggested that you sell it.

FRANKLIN, Yeah, LuAnne told me that you were comin' back, and I decided to get you back here sooner. And that's all right 'bout the other night, I shouldn't have lost my temper. And I'm afraid she has done what she set out to do! I really don't know about this movin' to the city. It'll be a whole new world to me, but I owe it to LuAnne. Lord knows, I've kept her here in the middle of nowhere for too long.

(*LuAnne enters the scene by coming from inside the house.*)

LUANNE, Hello there, Mr. Dillman. Did Frank tell you the good news?

DILLMAN, He certainly did. I'm very happy for you!

LUANNE, Thank you.

DILLMAN, I have already spoken to a good friend of mine and I think that he has a job for Frank.

LUANNE, Really? Thank God this is all working out so good! I'm practically ready to leave now.

DILLMAN, Whenever you are ready, send me a letter. (*Exits.*)

FRANK, *(disturbed)* I still can't figure out why Dillman is so interested in buying this place.

LUANNE, Like he said, Frank, he just wants a place to get away from the city.

FRANK, An' look at the price he's givin' us. Do you think that this place is worth that much?

LUANNE, *(agitated)* Frank! With your sentimental attitude about this place, I didn't figure that you thought it was enough. *(rises, shaking head and leaves room.)*

FRANK, *(speaking to himself)* Yeah, well I wonder how long we'll be there before we'll need to get away.

SCENE IV, *(Dillman is sitting at a desk in a small office counting money. Through the open door to the left, sounds of ragtime music along with the voices of men and women drift in with the cigar and cigarette smoke. Muffled sounds of an old cash register ringing can be heard intermittently. The telephone on Dillman's desk rings.)*

DILLMAN, Yeah, boss. It looks as if it will go country-wide, doesn't it? This prohibition issue has gotten way out of hand. But there will be a lot of money to be made by keeping some on hand in an out-of-the-way place. Don't worry, boss, I have just the place; it's called Franklin's General Store. And as someone described it before, it's in the middle of nowhere.

The End

Jerry LaVonne Hamilton
First Place, Drama

COLLEGE CONTRIBUTORS

CINDY ALEXANDER is a secretarial science major. She resides in Jayess, is married, and has two children. Cindy plans to become an executive secretary.

WADE ALEXANDER, JR., a forestry major, enjoys hunting and fishing. After graduation from Co-Lin this spring, he plans to complete his education at a senior college and hopes for a job that calls for some work out-of-doors.

BARBARA BLACK, an art major, enjoys painting, swimming, writing, and dancing. Her future plans are to write, illustrate, and obtain her degree in art. Barbara regularly writes a column, "College Lifeline" in the **Wolf Tales**, and has received numerous awards in art competitions.

BARBARA BOONE is a freshman at Co-Lin. When Barbara was in high school, she was a winner in the **Microcosm** literary competition.

BRENDA BREWER, a secretarial science major, plans to find a good job and continue her studies at night school.

ALICE BROWN, an accounting major, plans to finish senior college, pass the CPA exam, and find employment as an auditor. Alice enjoys water skiing, horseback riding, sewing, cooking, and reading.

MAURICE CAMMACK, JR., plans to teach secondary level business education and computer science. This is his first creative writing effort.

BEVERLY CLARK is a freshman journalism major at Co-Lin. Her future plans include attending the University of Southern Mississippi. Afterwards, she would like to get a job, get married, and write a book or two.

LUCILLE O. CROSBY, secretarial science major, enjoys writing, singing and sewing. Her future plans are to complete her college courses and to write inspirational material for publication.

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MARY ANN RUTLAND is an art major at Co-Lin who placed second in **Microcosm's** poetry division last year.

KAREN LEIGH WOLFRUM, a sophomore pre-nursing major, plans to work as a nurse in the army before getting her Ph.D. She plans to attend the University of Southern Mississippi.



